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VOLUME LXVI, NUMBER 20119

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1998 • TEVET 12, 5759 • 13 RAMADAN 1419

NIS 5.50 (EILAT NIS 4.70)



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Court upholds non-Orthodox conversions

By HAIM SHAPIRO
and LIAT COLLINS

In a surprise decision, made public yesterday, Jerusalem District Court President Vardi Zeiler ruled that 23 individuals and families converted by Reform and Conservative rabbis here and abroad are Jews for purposes of registration in the population registry.

Commenting on the legal aspects of the case, retired Jerusalem District Court president Asher Felix Landau said it is not unusual for a district court to rule on an issue normally seen as the purview of the High Court. He added that

the ruling is limited in scope, referring only to civil registration as Jews. The ruling came as a surprise not just to the ministry and the politicians, but to the Reform movement's Israel Religious Action Center, which had represented the converts in court. Rabbi Uri Regev, director of the IRAC, said that judges usually inform the parties in advance of their intention to issue a decision, while here Zeiler simply notified the families. Regev described the ruling as historic,

going beyond the technical issue. The decision follows a High Court ruling in November 1995, which held that the state had no legal basis to refuse to register as a Jew someone converted here by a non-Orthodox rabbi. But the court refrained from taking the next step

and ordering the ministry to register the petitioner, Hava Pesaro-Goldstein, as Jewish. Although it had not actually said so, the widespread perception was that it had given the Knesset six months in which to legislate concerning the validity of non-Orthodox conversions performed here. However, Zeiler's ruling related not only to those converted in Israel, but to Israeli citizens who had prepared for their conversion here, then gone abroad for the formal conversion ceremony.

Although the ministry had in the past accepted such conversions as valid, more recently it had rejected them. Lately, it has also refused to register non-Orthodox converts from abroad as Jews unless they actually lived in the community in which they were converted for a period of time after their conversion. The ruling bluntly rejects any such geographical considerations, arguing that they should no more relate to conversions than they do, say, to marriages. As to the argu-

ment by the State Attorney's Office that the appellants should have waited until the Knesset acted, Zeiler said that the appellants had been patient and they had rights with no legal system could deny. Regev said that if the ruling is upheld, it would mean that many people who want to convert have a viable solution. This is especially important, he said, because of what he described as the "growing rigidity of the Orthodox."

See CONVERSION, Page 4

Parents blame army after son killed by friendly fire

By DAVID RUDGE

The parents of Staff-Sgt. Ohad Zach, 19, blamed the army yesterday for the death of their son in a friendly fire incident in the security zone, citing the senior command's refusal to replace a company commander despite repeated complaints by his unit that he was unqualified. Zach, of Nofit village, near Kiryat Tivon, was killed and two others wounded when a unit of Golani Brigade troops opened fire on their comrades from the same company, believing they were Hizbullah gunmen.

establishment knew about this problem [of Lapid] and the matter was investigated, but he was allowed to continue to act [as the unit's commander]. I blame the [army] establishment directly

is that it seems that this accident was caused by a navigational error that the [senior command] was aware of. The soldiers in his unit had told him time and time again about this navigational problem and asked that it be fixed, but nothing was done. It seems that they were waiting for more and more errors before they took a step to fix it. This should not have happened.



Staff-Sgt. Ohad Zach

The family's anger came to the fore after a team from Ohad's unit, accompanied by senior officers, came to their home yesterday morning, spread out a map of the region where the tragedy occurred and explained to them exactly what happened.

Zach was critically wounded in the clash and died on the way to the hospital. The first IDF fatality from the small hilltop community was laid to rest at the military cemetery in Kiryat Tivon yesterday afternoon. Nofit itself does not yet have a cemetery.

Another soldier in Zach's squad, Sgt. Guy Nissim, was moderately wounded after being hit by shrapnel in the face, and was blinded in his right eye. He was taken to Sheba Hospital at Tel Hashomer.

Lapid was lightly hurt and was taken to Sieff Hospital. The initial investigation indicated that when Lapid realized his navigational mistake, he led the soldiers back toward the place they should have been, but by a different route.

It was apparently at this point that Nissim, in charge of the rear unit, which also included Zach, the radio operator, spotted silhouettes which were in fact the advance party.

Expert calls for body to oversee IDF probes, Page 2

units lost contact with one another while en route to carry out an ambush. Initial inquiries revealed that the advance squad, led by Sec-Lt. Assaf Lapid, 21, the company commander, made a navigational error and took a wrong route down into a wadi instead of to the ambush site. Haim Zach, Ohad's father, pointed a finger at Lapid, the son of prisoner rehabilitation activist Herut Lapid. Lapid said his son, who was also wounded and hospitalized at Sieff Hospital in Safed, also blamed himself for Zach's death and would not hear otherwise. But he called for a thorough investigation of the incident, saying such accusations play into the hands of Hizbullah. Haim Zach said "the entire

for Ohad's death. "The tragedy is everyone's responsibility. Everyone knew about the company commander and I blame them. The company commander is only 21 years old, and the direct responsibility in this matter belongs to the battalion commander or maybe even the division commander, if they gave that officer command. "This should not have happened," said Zach's mother, Naomi. "If the soldiers warn about a certain problem, they are not totally stupid, and they know what they are talking about. "The battalion commander and the ones above and below him should pay attention to what [the soldiers] say and not wait until there's a collection of X-number of errors and then clear the arena [to make way] for somebody else," she said. "What is even worse about it

See FIRE, Page 2

PM urges Mordechai, Livnat to stay in Likud

By MICHAEL YUDELMAN

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu yesterday called on Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and Communications Minister Limor Livnat, who are wavering between staying in the Likud and quitting, to "stay home" in the party.

Mordechai and Livnat met for an hour, according to one estimate, trying to coordinate their moves. "There is no chance of my



changing my positions for a seat or anything else," Livnat told Channel 1 yesterday, when asked about the possibility of joining Dan Meridor's center list. "I'll make up my mind soon. It's not a matter of weeks or months, but a few days. Then I'll announce what my intentions are."

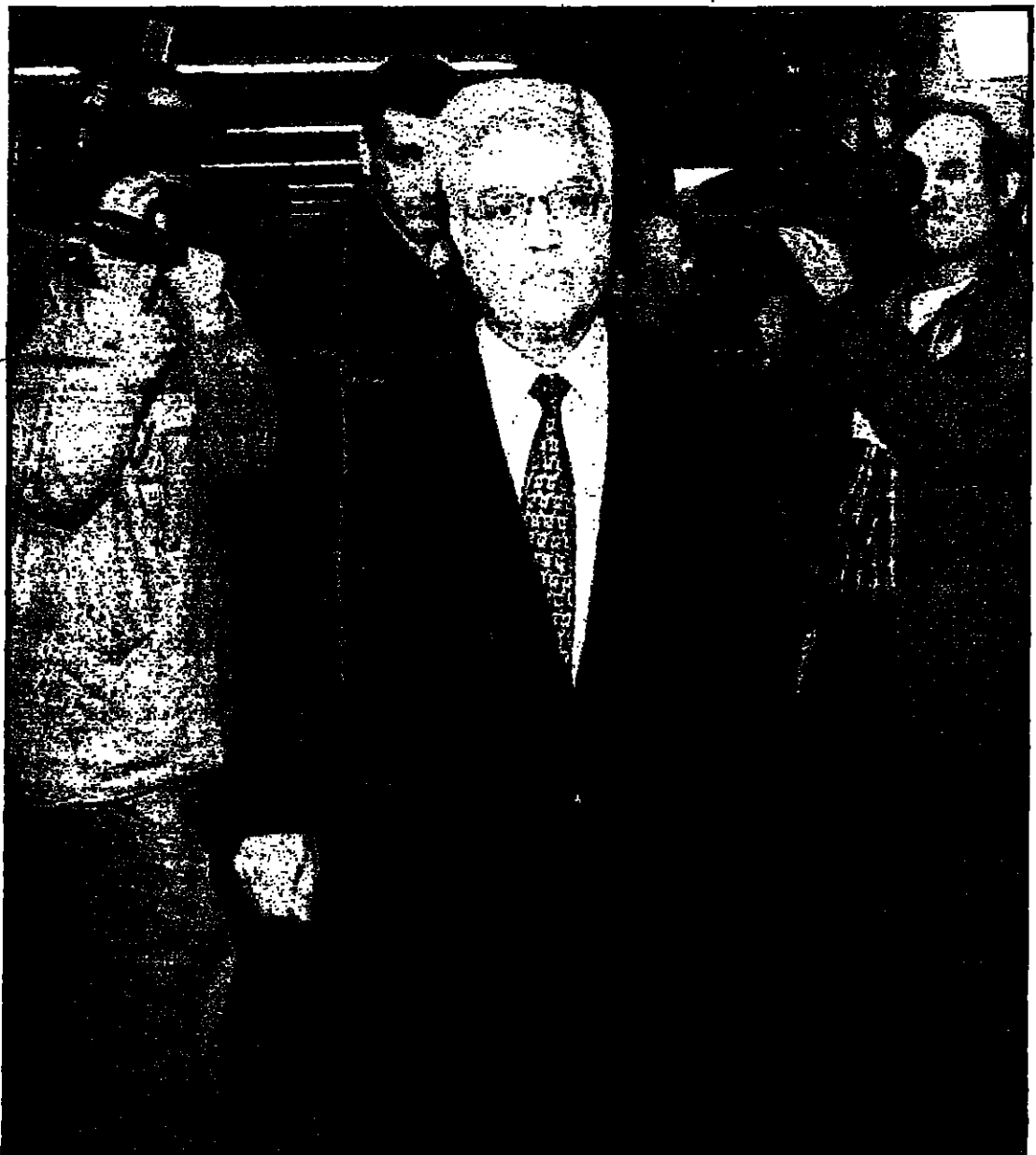
Settlers won't endorse candidate, Page 3
Weizman denies meddling, Page 4

Likud sources, who have been saying Livnat was on the brink of leaving the party, now express hope she'll stay.

Mordechai, who met with Shas's spiritual mentor Rabbi Ovadia Yosef earlier this week, denied Channel 1's report that Yosef had implored him to stay in the Likud. "Only you, who are sensitive to human life, can lead Netanyahu to peace," Yosef said to Mordechai, according to Channel 1.

"The meeting was between the two of us, no one else was there, and what you reported was wrong. Yosef didn't implore me to do anything, he didn't ask me to stay in the Likud. We analyzed the situation, we agreed it was complicated and required further consultation," Mordechai told Channel 1. He refused to say what his future plans are.

Netanyahu continued sending emissaries to try to persuade Mordechai to stay in the Likud. He reportedly promised him a written commitment to appoint him



MK David Levy is tracked by television crews at the Knesset yesterday. Levy is negotiating the terms of a political partnership with Labor Party leader Ehud Barak. (AP)

defense minister in the next cabinet, providing he is elected prime minister. Netanyahu said he is not concerned over the possibility that Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon would run against him for prime minister, following Sharon's statement that "in certain circumstances" he would consider such a move. "I've spoken to the foreign minister. We're acting toward full cooperation for victory in the elections, and I intend, with his help,

and with the help of the rest of our colleagues, to lead the government onward, after the elections as well," Netanyahu said. Meanwhile, Labor Party leader Ehud Barak is making efforts to calm the ferment in the party over the fledgling agreement between him and Geshet head David Levy. Levy denied he and Barak had discussed reserving the second or third slot on Labor's list for himself, and another two or three slots for other Geshet members. "Nothing has been agreed. When

I meet Barak and he tells me of his idea of the One Israel front, it's good to hear. Beyond that, there's nothing yet," Levy said. Barak called on Labor MKs to "show responsibility and unite for victory, and stop imitating the Likud MKs." He was referring to the protests, mainly from backbenchers, who fear that reserving places for Geshet members might jeopardize their chances of getting into the Knesset.

See PM, Page 2

Hype over new medical laser draws criticism

By JUDY SIEGEL

The ethics committee of the Israel Otolaryngology Society is to discuss on Tuesday a senior doctor's promotion in the media of an expensive laser device he helped develop that burns a hole in the eardrums of children suffering from chronic middle-ear infections.

Committee chairman Prof. Ludwig Podoshin said he would take this initiative after *The Jerusalem Post* queried a press release about the device issued Monday by Jerusalem's Shaare Zedek Hospital. The two-page press release, based on information by ear-nose-and-throat (ENT) department chairman Dr. David Cohen, resulted in a filmed item presented on Channel 1's *Mabat* newscast that night and a story in *Ma'ariv*. This publicity resulted in considerable interest among parents of children with chronic ear infections who sought

laser treatment. Podoshin, who retired last year from Haifa's Bnai Zion Hospital after being chairman of its ENT department for 32 years, joined three department heads in saying that the device had not undergone randomized, double-blind, controlled studies, which are the core of evidence-based medicine. They also stated that the Otoscan - manufactured by Israel Laser Industries - is "not a breakthrough, not meant for treating the majority of chronic ear infections in infants and young children, and that it had not been proven more effective than conventional treatments for the condition."

Although Yossi Shechter, director of the Otoscan project, said the carbon-dioxide laser had "won the approval of the US Food and Drug Administration" and called the invention "a breakthrough." The *Post* learned that this was not the hard-won FDA authorization based on extensive double-blind, randomized control studies proving technology is not only safe, but more effective than previous technologies. Instead, Otoscan - patented in the US

after it adapted and improved various existing licensed technologies for a specific medical use - received approval only in the FDA's much more lenient 5-10(K) category. Manufacturers of 5-10(K) devices are not entitled to claim they are more effective than existing technologies, according to Nadav Sheffer, head of the Health Ministry's medical device assessment department. The Shaare Zedek press release, issued by spokeswoman Orna Cohen, maintained that the hospital is the first and only place in Israel to use the Otoscan, which was "presented for the first time in the US at the annual conference of ENT physicians last September, aroused much interest, and was defined by some of the doctors as a breakthrough in treating ear infections."

The release said that a benefit of the laser is that it allows perforation of the eardrum in a split second in an outpatient clinic, "before the baby has a chance to move.... Until now, ENT specialists had two types of treatment options: antibiotics or inserting drainage tubes into the ear."

See LASER, Page 3

Levy can help Barak shed loser image

Labor Party chairman Ehud Barak does not really need tangible gains to win big from the possible recruitment of Geshet's David Levy. Labor MK Shlomo Ben-Ami is probably right in judging that Barak's benefit will be virtual. But this may not be anything to be scoffed at in an age of virtual reality, virtual parties, and virtual candidates.

It is highly debatable that Levy can bring Barak any more votes than those of his extended family. He is no longer the outstanding spokesman for the North African community. Those who cheered him in the Likud may not do so once he is in Labor. Besides, the arena now abounds with populist politicians who learned well from

Levy. The most recent newcomer to this brand of politics is Histadrut chairman Amir Peretz.

Whether or not his new workers party ever gets off the ground is a moot point. It may be no more than a vehicle to promote himself in Labor or in the new centrist party.

The consensus is that if such a party is ever fielded, it will flop. But the Peretz venture shows that Levy has plenty of emulators.

Besides the blow to Barak's image, discontent Laborites threaten to abandon him and hitch a ride on Shahak's untarnished bandwagon. Levy could remedy all that. Instead of Barak appearing like one who loses support, Levy can instantly bestow on him the image of one who attracts new allies. At this point this is more valuable for Barak than ballots in the box. Before he goes after votes, Barak needs to shore up his candidacy.

If Levy makes Barak look less like a loser, he will make it more difficult for leading Laborites to flock to Shahak. If their pretext would be that Barak cannot win or attract support, Levy would be proof to the contrary. This might sway the genuinely undecided. Those who have made up their mind against Barak will leave, but Levy's co-option will, at least in appearance, make up for their departure. Barak is willing to pay the price for what Levy has to offer. He will put Levy high up on the list of the Labor-led One Israel bloc, even if that means pushing his own party's luminaries down.

See ANALYSIS, Page 2



NEWS

in brief

Two die on roads

Yoni Moshe, 20, of Ramat Hasharon, was killed yesterday when he was thrown from his motorcycle after it hit a jaywalker in the town. The pedestrian, 34, was taken to the Rabin Medical Center in Petah Tikva in serious condition. In the South, an unidentified young man was killed when he lost control of the stolen car he was driving and overturned near Beersheba. He was taken to Soroka Hospital, where he died of his injuries. The car had been stolen in Yeroham. *Itim*

Katyusha victims visit Weizmans

Keren and Golan Hevroni, who lost the twins Keren was carrying in her womb when she was hurt during the recent Katyusha attacks on Kiryat Shmona, will be spending this weekend at a Jerusalem hotel, courtesy of Beit Hanassi.

President Ezer Weizman and his wife, Reuma, yesterday welcomed the Hevronis to Beit Hanassi and also extended financial assistance to the couple, who have a toddler son. The Hevronis had complained in the media that no public figures came to extend condolences on the loss of the two fetuses. *Batsheva Tsor*

Narkis wins Israel Prize for art history

Hebrew University Prof. Bezalel Narkis is the winner of this year's Israel Prize in the field of history of art, Education Minister Yitzhak Levy announced yesterday.

The prize committee announced that Narkis won for his life's work in the field, particularly for his research in illuminated Jewish manuscripts of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. The committee also cited his training of generations of students in the field.

The Israel Prizes will be awarded on Yom Ha'atzmaut.



Bezalel Narkis
(Ezraim Kishonik)
Jerusalem Post Staff

Patriots going home for New Year

US Secretary of Defense William Cohen has authorized the return of the three Patriot batteries, which were brought here from Germany at the beginning of the month. They were originally brought in for a joint US-European command (EUCOM) and IDF rapid response exercise, and were kept here with the onset of the crisis in the Gulf. This week, the Patriots and a majority of the US military personnel that accompanied them, have returned to Germany. *Donna Harman*

Germans to fight Wye, EU linkage

By DANNA HARMAN

Officials in Germany - which will assume the presidency of the European Union tomorrow - have indicated that they will fight linking Israeli participation in an EU research and development program with implementation of the Wye accord.

"Germany sees no connection between Israeli participation in such purely scientific and technical cooperation and developments and the Middle East peace process," an official at the German Embassy in Tel Aviv said yesterday.

He added that the German presidency would seek to finalize the matter as soon as possible, "all the more since Israel's participation in the program is also in the EU's own interest."

A decision on Israel's participation in the R&D program is to be taken in the second week of January, but the preliminary decision taken last week by a European Council of Ministers working group - reportedly spearheaded by the French - was not to include Israel in the EU's 5th Framework Program.

This means that, among other things, Israel will be ineligible to receive any of the 14.96 billion euros (NIS 53.2b.) in R&D funding that is to be given out over the next four years, or to participate in joint scientific projects with the EU.

It was under the last German presidency, in second half of 1994, that Israel was given a privileged status in relations with the EU, and it was this status that then served as the basis for both the Israel-EU trade association agreement and the R&D agreement.

Since 1996, when it joined, Israel has been the only non-EU country to take part in the R&D project.

"There is a special relationship between our countries, and a vital interest on our part that the Israel-EU relationship works out," said a German official.

Germany is seen by many in the Foreign Ministry as "Israel's best friend" in the EU, and while the presidency does not have more power than any of the other member states, there is a hope that during their six months in the seat, the Germans will work to better the somewhat rocky Israel-EU relationship.

While the question of the R&D program is prominent, the matter of greatest concern to Israel in the coming months is the question of the EU's attitude toward recognition

of Palestinian statehood, should it be declared in May.

German Ambassador Theodor Wallau would not comment on this, saying it is as yet unnecessary for the EU to state its position. Wallau did say that there is great interest in supporting the peace process, and finding ways of giving it a "material backing."

In February, Germany will host a follow-up meeting to the Washington donor's conference, at which the matter of allocating the funds donated to the PA will be discussed.

The Germans, besides donating to the PA through the EU, also give some DM 100 million in aid annually. Most of these funds, in recent years, have successfully been directed toward developing and building waste disposal projects in Gaza and the West Bank.

Rabbinate backs down on Jaffa New Year's fete

By HAIM SHAPIRO

New Year's Eve, or as it is known to many Israelis, Sylvester - it is St. Sylvester's day - is due to be celebrated in restaurants and hotels throughout the country, including in the Neptune Hall in Bat Yam, where the Greek Catholic community of Jaffa is to hold a party despite the efforts of the local rabbinate.

Following a warning by the Bat Yam Religious Council that it would rescind the kashrut certificate of the hall if the party took place, the community petitioned the High Court.

At a hearing yesterday, the legal adviser of the Chief Rabbinate withdrew all the objections of the Bat Yam rab-

binat to the event, agreeing that those holding the party could have a Christmas tree, display Christian religious symbols, and invite Jewish guests, without impinging on the kashrut of the hall.

Yusef Dik, lay head of the community, said he felt that the original threat of the rabbinate had been racist in intent, but said that thanks to the court, "we continue to live in a democratic society."

He added that the court had foiled a last-minute effort by the rabbinate to threaten the hall, by ordering the kashrut inspectors to remain on the premises until the party ends, so that the rabbinate could not later question the kashrut of the utensils.

Expert calls for public body to oversee IDF accident probes

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

The late prime minister Yitzhak Rabin once said there is no solace for families that lose their sons in military accidents.

No matter how sophisticated army technology and communications may be, friendly fire incidents occur.

Whether such mishaps are caused by miscalculations or bad luck is irrelevant in their aftermath, if one is left with the thought that perhaps not everything is being done to avoid their recurrence.

Prof. Stuart Cohen, a senior research fellow at Bar-Ilan University's Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, suggests establishing a parliamentary or public watchdog body to oversee results of IDF inquiries into all forms of accidents.

The main tasks of such a body would be to ensure that the recommendations stemming from such inquiries are implemented.

he said. However, he added, the IDF is best equipped to conduct the actual inquiries into accidents.

Cohen insists there has been a general decline in the number of friendly fire fatalities and casualties this decade, due to a greater awareness in the IDF and also an increased public involvement and awareness.

Tragic accidents are often caused by exhausted troops operating under constant pressure, said Col. (res.) Moshe Givati on Israel Radio yesterday. The IDF constantly carries out investigations and reassessments of situations whether there are mishaps or not, he said.

Despite the sophisticated technology the human factor cannot be ignored. Scores of operations are carried out by troops in Lebanon daily, he said, adding that the soldiers are on constant alert and often have to make quick decisions whether something they saw is the enemy.

Other friendly fire incidents this year

April 11 - A tank mistakenly opened fire believing terrorists were attempting to infiltrate an outpost at Karkoun. No one was injured.

July 2 - A unit travelling from Hatmah Gate to the Rehan outpost in south Lebanon was mistaken for terrorists by soldiers in the outpost, who opened fire. No one was injured.

August 31 - Shots were exchanged between an IDF unit and soldiers at an SLA post. There were no injuries.

November 25 - A tank fired shots at IDF troops manning an outpost at Rehan believing they were terrorists. No one was injured.

December 4 - Two IDF soldiers and an SLA soldier were wounded when an IDF combat engineer unit on an ambush was spotted by off-duty SLA soldiers who opened fire, believing them to be Hizbullah gunman. The IDF troops returned fire. *Margot Dudkevitch*

PM

Continued from Page 1

There is also unease over the talks with Internal Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani, of the Third Way, who may join the party, and Barak's efforts to get Mordechai to join the One Israel front. Labor MKs grumbled yesterday that Barak was doing to Labor what Netanyahu did to the

Likud before the last elections; when he brought in outsiders and wrecked the party.

MK Shlomo Ben-Ami, who has been an advocate of Labor's opening itself to a wider public, commended the agreement with Levy. But, he said, "it's a pity Labor reached figures such as David Levy 30 years late."

MK Nissim Zivili, who is still wavering between staying in Labor and joining Amnon Lipkin-

Shahak's future center party, said the agreement with Levy is an "almost desperate" move by Barak to prove he can broaden his support beyond the Left.

Labor's Knesset faction chairman Elie Goldschmidt welcomed Levy and Geshet, saying "Levy is a very highly regarded personality and very close to Labor's political, social, and economic positions." Goldschmidt said Geshet MKs Maxim Levy and Yehuda Lankei would be "a wonderful asset to Labor" and their support would emphasize the party's intentions to work for and represent all the sectors.

He urged his colleagues to receive Levy "warmly and cordially, rather than grudgingly" and scolded Zivili for his attack.

MK Binyamin Ben-Eliezer welcomed Levy and said, "This is a vital move for Barak's policy and is good for Labor's opening to new groups. This will advance Barak's movement One Israel to its goal of forming a broad front of many sectors and communities."

Meretz leader Yossi Sarid welcomed Levy's move to join Barak. "Meretz is satisfied with the link between Barak and Levy which broadens the social front of the Labor Party. It was Meretz which paved the way when it established together with Geshet the 'Social Camp' in the Histadrut. This was the first step. It was the right direction and it is good to see there is now a continuation," Sarid said. *Liat Collins contributed to this report.*

ANALYSIS

Continued from Page 1

While Laborites may swallow that, they are sure to have a harder time sacrificing their own safe slots on the Knesset list for Levy's cronies. That is what caused the deal Levy was negotiating with the Likud just a month ago to fall through.

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu was willing to let Levy have inordinate representation in the Likud central committee as a means to winning those safe slots for the next Knesset. But the party MKs, led by rebel Communications Minister Limor Livnat, foiled that. Barak knows the row had nothing to do with the finance portfolio but with finding Levy a new political home. The recent local elec-

tions proved that Geshet is a virtual faction with no electoral prospects whatever. This sent Levy scurrying back to the Likud.

Were it not for Livnat, Levy would be there now and no early elections would have been called. Aware of all this, Barak urged Labor's MKs to keep mum and not take a leaf out of Livnat's book. The last thing he wants is for Levy to take umbrage, and he knows how touchy Levy can get and how unpredictable and difficult he is to get along with.

Barak knows the only reason Levy is not in the Likud now as Netanyahu's ardent booster is the fact that he was denied the Knesset slots for which he asked. As a result, Levy went shopping in another supermarket, and Barak is not about to let this business opportunity slip away.

FIRE

Continued from Page 1

The advance unit was not, however, in the place it was supposed to be, and the soldiers in the rear squad apparently had every reason to believe the silhouettes were those of gunmen, not their comrades.

According to the initial investigation, Nissim radioed Lapid and asked for permission to open fire. Lapid gave the order, apparently without first making all necessary checks. In fact, he gave permission for his own soldiers in the rear to open fire on himself and his unit.

"Apparently, as a result of an error of judgment, the unit commander, after a few checks, gave permission for the [rear] unit to open fire," said Brig.-Gen. Efi (Fein) Eitam, Galilee commander. "The unit commander and other soldiers at the point saw the shooting from behind and returned fire [at the rear unit], and as a result of this two-way fire, the soldiers were hit," said Eitam.

According to the initial inquiries, Lapid did not inform the rear squad that he had lost his way or give them details of the advance party's movements, which would have enabled the troops behind to identify them from the location. Eitam said that, from the initial findings, it appears the main reason for the accident was a "series of professional errors and mistakes in judgment on the part of the unit commander."

He declined to comment about reports that the soldiers themselves had complained about Lapid's lack of professionalism, and in particular his previous navigational mistakes.

A report on Israel Radio said that senior officers in the Golan Brigade were aware of Lapid's shortcomings, but he had been left in his post due to manpower problems.

The IDF Spokesman said the findings and the recommendations of a formal inquiry will be presented to OC Northern Command Maj.-Gen. Gabi Ashkenazy next week. Zach's death brought to 23 the

number of IDF soldiers killed in Lebanon this year, in addition to an Israeli civilian who died in a bomb blast in the security zone.

Zach is survived by his parents, grandparents, an older sister, Adva, 23, and a younger sister, Aviv, 12.

MK Yossi Beilin (Labor), a leader of the movement for Lebanon withdrawal, said the incident shows that "this zone is not a security zone. It's an insecurity zone."

Beilin was speaking during a debate in the Knesset on the recent killing of Lebanese civilians and

the subsequent Katyusha attacks. MK Michael Nudelman (Yisrael Ba'aliya) called on all MKs pushing for a unilateral withdrawal to "first like me come and live in Kiryat Shmona."

He said Israel is sending out a message of weakness and giving in, and Hizbullah is jumping on the opportunity and has said it will continue to attack Israelis even after a withdrawal.

Margot Dudkevitch, Nina Gilbert, Liat Collins, and Itim contributed to this report.

Ministry of the Interior

Tender No. 42/98

Request for Proposal (RFP)

The Ministry of the Interior hereby requests proposals for the preparation of a Comprehensive Integrated National Outline Scheme for Water Land Uses Management; Use, Treatment and Regulation.

This RFP is intended for those interested in submitting a detailed work plan proposal, according to the RFP's specifications which may be purchased for a fee of NIS 600 from Yosef Grinzwieg, Director of Facilities, The Ministry of the Interior, Kiryat Ben Gurion, 2 Kaplan St., Room 105, Jerusalem, from January 3, 1999 to January 14, 1999 between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

The Ministry reserves the right to disqualify any proposal in which the project manager or members of the project staff have a conflict of interests between this project and other professional or business engagements, as further stipulated in the tender documents.

The final date for submission is February 18, 1999 at 12 noon.

All questions regarding the RFP should be submitted in Hebrew only, by fax to Ofra Livne at 02-670-1633. (Tel: 02-670-1466)

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State of Israel Bonds
mourns the death of
MICHAEL (MIKE) LEVY
Former Guest Department Director
and extends heartfelt sympathies
to his wife Chava and the family

BOSTON UNIVERSITY
Master of Science in Management Program
The staff, faculty, and students
offer condolences to
Dr. SAM MENDLINGER
on the passing of his
FATHER

Don't Waste Even...
A Single Drop!

Bill defeated to raise election threshold to 5%

By NINA GILBERT and LIAT COLLINS

A bill that would raise the threshold for a party's entry into the Knesset to five percent of the vote from 1.5% was easily defeated yesterday in preliminary reading.

MK Meir Sheerit (Likud), the sponsor of the bill, said "the threshold of 1.5% is a cause of much fragmentation in the political system and the proliferation of parties. In this situation, I expect that in the next Knesset there will be 20 parties. The Knesset is being dissolved now because of this fragmentation."

Sheerit said the Knesset should pass the law in order to convince small parties to unite into bigger parties.

MK Tamar Gozansky (Hadash), interjected: "You united, referring to the joint Geshet-Likud Tsomet list, 'and look at how you have become divided.'"

At the same time, Sheerit said he was not specifically committed to 5% but would like to work on reaching an acceptable number with other MKs seeking a similar reform.

MK Shevah Weiss (Labor) said he was opposed to legislation that is aimed at influencing a particular election by those who are fearful of what is on the political horizon.

Raising the threshold "is a most sensitive issue," he said, adding that the system is based on a wide representation of all groups in society.

"The implication of such an increase is the unnatural elimination of public groups which have a right to express opinions here," he said.

He said that when he was Speaker in the last Knesset, he was also opposed to the decision to boost the threshold point from 1% to 1.5%.

Among the 11 MKs who supported the bill were members of smaller parties, including National Religious Party MKs Hanan Porat, Avner Shaki, and Shmariya Ben-Zur, and Yisrael Ba'aliya MKs Marina Solodkin and Roman Bronfman.

However, among the 63 MKs from across the political spectrum who voted against the proposal, all but 25 Labor

MKs and Likud MK Gideon Ezra were from the smaller parties in the Knesset.

Naomi Blumenthal, who voted for the proposal, blasted the Labor Party MKs who came out in full force to defeat the measure.

After the vote, Sheerit said: "Today the Labor Party has shown its true face. The party is closing its eyes while the political system is falling apart into small fragments."

Meanwhile, Ben-Zur also presented a similar private member's bill to Sheerit's, which would increase the threshold to 2%. It will be voted on at a later stage.

The Knesset Law Committee yesterday approved for first reading a bill by

MK Yael Dayan (Labor) cutting the required cooling-off period for senior public servants and military figures wanting to enter politics.

Under the bill the senior public officials and high-ranking officers would be able to run for Knesset 50 days after leaving their posts.

This would cut the current cooling-off period in half. The committee hopes to expedite the legislation so it can pass second and third reading before this Knesset is dissolved for the elections.

A bill by MK Ruby Rivlin (Likud) calling for a one-year cooling-off period will be discussed at a later date.

The committee also approved for second and third reading a bill by commit-

tee chairman Hanan Porat (NRP) under which if the government falls in a no-confidence motion in the prime minister, elections would be held within 90 days and not 60 days as currently.

It also decided to forward a bill under which for a period of 120 days before elections, it would not be possible to file motions of no-confidence in the prime minister.

This is to prevent the current situation in which theoretically even after the Knesset has decided to go to early elections under the Dissolution Law or shortly before scheduled general elections, the government could still fall in a no-confidence motion and be forced to go to the polls even earlier.

Tibi: Arafat or Knesset, not both

By IF AHMED

Tibi decides to run for the Knesset, he will resign his post as political adviser to Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat, he said yesterday.

"Although I would not be legally required to do so, I would resign as Arafat's adviser because I like to concentrate on one task at a time," he said.

Tibi, originally from Taibe and now a resident of Jerusalem, has been accused repeatedly by the Right of exhibiting dual loyalty because he is an Israeli citizen working for Arafat. He insists, though, that he is doing nothing wrong, because Israel and the PA are no longer enemies, but partners.

Tibi ran for the Knesset in 1996, but aborted his campaign shortly before the election. The reasons, he said, were because Arafat wanted him to stay on, and because he didn't want to take the chance of failing to win a seat and thereby wasting his supporters' votes.

Tibi's party, the Arab Movement for Change, decided over the weekend to run again. Tibi, however, said he has not yet made up his mind whether to head the list.

"I enjoy my job as political adviser to President Arafat. I find it fascinating and satisfying. The greater likelihood is that I will not run for the Knesset," he said, adding that this time he will decide strictly according to "personal considerations," not Arafat's.

FORMER chief of General Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak will tour Kiryat Shmona and other communities on the northern border today. He will meet with community leaders and visit homes damaged in last week's Katyusha attack, and intends to make a statement regarding security and state affairs in Tel Hai.

Shahak, who is forming a center party, hopes to present his nucleus of a team at a press conference

ELECTIONS NOTEBOOK

By LARRY BERENSON, LIAT COLLINS and BATSHEVA TSUR

Shahak's new offices yesterday, including Histadrut chairman Amir Peretz, who yesterday morning announced he was thinking of setting up a workers' party.

KNESSET Speaker Dan Tichon yesterday proposed to the House Committee that the plenum not convene during February, when MKs will be busy with primary election campaigns. It would meet in special sessions if necessary, he said.

Tichon also said the work of the plenum should be drastically cut from February 1 to prevent MKs from using the pre-election period to pass populist bills which could be a huge drain on public funds.

Tichon said even after February, it might be necessary to cut the number of days a week the plenum convenes and promised he would do everything to stop bills aimed at "buying" a certain sector from coming up for a vote before the elections.

In the period preceding the last elections, so many MKs were absent from the House that then Speaker Shevah Weiss ordered an early spring recess, after a series of bills passed into law on the basis of the votes of the two and three MKs present.

The Knesset this year is scheduled to start its Pessah recess March 19.

ARYE Shumer, director-general of Beit Hanassi, said yesterday he would not enter the election race. Shumer said he had received "various offers, including from the Labor Party," but had turned them all down.

"I have been with [Ezer Weizman] for 17 years now and I don't intend to leave him. My mission lies in my present position," Shumer said.

LASER

Continued from Page 1

The disadvantage of antibiotics, she wrote, is that they can create a population of resistant microbes and cause side effects, while the tubes have to be inserted under general anesthesia and water must be kept out of the ear. Over the past two-and-a-half years, Dr. Cohen used Otoscan on 30 babies, 16 children, and 15 adults, and "it was found very effective in babies up to the age of two with acute ear infections."

The hospital spokeswoman said it "was not Shaare Zedek that claimed it to be a breakthrough; we were just quoting American doctors who said it was."

Podoshin said that "there is no danger in inserting drainage tubes under general anesthesia, and making a hole in an eardrum using a tiny knife is very effective when long-term tube drainage is not required. The efficacy of laser-made holes has not been proven in any basic research. It's a waste of tens of thousands of dollars per device. Now that it has gotten widespread publicity, parents will insist on getting high-tech lasers, and Dr. Cohen will have to buy four Otoscan to cope with the demand. I would prefer to see the device tested on 500 lab animals and only then have it used on babies."

Prof. Dov Ophir, head of the ENT department at Meir Hospital in Kfar Sava, said the stories on TV and in one newspaper resulted in "many ENT specialists calling each other angrily objecting to the publicity, which was not backed up by an objective study. There are advantages and disadvantages to each type of treatment; but laser treatment isn't quicker than the knife, and lasers in a baby's ear could be risky too."

Prof. Yona Kronenberg, director of ENT at Sheba Hospital in Tel Hashomer, said making laser holes in eardrums is "a good treatment, but it should be offered only for

special cases of chronic ear infections and not to the wide range of patients. It isn't a breakthrough, and its efficacy over conventional methods has not been proven in a clear-cut way."

Prof. Yosef Elidan, head of the ENT department at Hadassah University Hospital in Jerusalem's Ein Kerem, declared that laser treatment "doesn't replace conventional treatment. It's a technical innovation, but it needs the backing of evidence-based medical research."

Dr. James Reilly, a former president of the American Pediatric ENT Society who is testing the Otoscan at the Dupont Children's Hospital in Wilmington, Delaware, said in a phone interview that his department paid \$28,000 for the device as an add-on to an existing Sharpplan laser. The laser hole remains open for two to four weeks, while tubes can remain in anywhere from four weeks to a year or two, requiring antibiotic "overkill" in some patients.

"I still insert tubes, but for a select population of kids who are high risk," a laser hole is preferable, he said. During the first six months of 1998, he used the laser effectively on 60 children out of 500; tubes were inserted in the rest of them.

His studies were not randomized, controlled, and double-blind. Nevertheless, he predicted that in two to five years, specialized centers in the US would be established to handle chronic middle ear infections with laser treatment. Surprised by opposition among leading Israeli ENTs, he suggested that they may be "conservative and unwilling to try new techniques."

The Health Ministry's Sheffer said that only medical devices that release radiation have to get ministry approval. "We see this is a big problem, so we have prepared legislation that will give my department powers to examine and/or approve all medical devices," he said.



Settler leaders meet last night in Jerusalem, where they decided not to back any candidate for prime minister. (Flash 90)

Settlers council decides not to endorse any candidate for PM

By MARGOT DUDKEVITCH

After a three-hour heated discussion, the board of the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria, and Gaza yesterday decided that council members would refrain from endorsing any prime ministerial candidate and would be allowed to vote as they wish.

Spokeswoman Yehudit Tayar said the council, which is comprised of members from different political spheres, does not recognize any party. The political situation is so unclear that members decided it would be premature to vote on which candidate it supports, she added.

Yesterday's meeting in Jerusalem culminated a frenzied few weeks that threatened to topple the council leadership. However, a consensus was reached that the council must do everything to promote security, development, and construction in all the communities it represents, said Tayar.

Many council members who are disappointed with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's leadership realize that their calls to topple the government may have been premature, as there appears to be no alternative. Some declared that while the intent was to strengthen Netanyahu and prevent him from bowing to US pressure, the move boomeranged.

Netanyahu met with several council leaders in his Jerusalem office last night to discuss their possible involvement in the election campaign. Itm reported. His spokesman denied reports that Netanyahu had offered council chairman Aharon Domb a job as head of the Likud information effort.

Some council members are in the midst of intense preparations to establish Tekuma, while others such as staunch Likud representative Benny Kashriel, the mayor of Ma'aleh Adumim, continue to support Netanyahu, said Tayar.

Qurei: Elections won't delay independence declaration

By BEN LYNFIELD

The Palestinian Authority will not change its plans to declare independence on May 4 in order to boost the Labor Party in the elections, Palestinian Legislative Council Speaker Ahmed Qurei indicated in remarks published yesterday.

"That is a historic, earnest, and significant day and the Palestinian decision in this regard has not changed," he told *Al-Ayam* daily. Qurei stressed that the PA would not seek to help any Israeli party by delaying the declaration. Although he did not mention Labor by name, it was clear that his remarks were intended to combat any impression that the PA would accommodate Labor's opposition to a May 4 declaration, which party leaders are concerned will help the Right in the May 17 vote.

"We are not giving bribes to the rival Israeli parties, our issue is the peace and we hope the elections will result in the Israelis respecting our legitimate rights," Qurei said.

May 4 is the date that the interim self-rule arrangements between Israel and the Palestinians that were reached as part of the Oslo process are due to expire. Palestinian leaders have repeatedly said that given the absence of final status arrangements, they will unilaterally declare a state on that day, prompting warnings of a tough response from Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.

An alternative possibility is that the interim period be extended by agreement of both sides.

Labor Party spokesman Yitzhak Rabinhiya reacted to Qurei's remarks. "We are convinced Netanyahu has caused this with

his unreliable, untalented handling of the Oslo agreements under the pressure of the extreme Right," he said. "The Labor Party expresses its hope that the PA will not act unilaterally in a fashion that negates the [Oslo] agreement and asserts that both Israel and the Palestinians should adhere to the Oslo Accords."

Likud spokeswoman Ronit Eckstein rejected the criticism of Netanyahu, saying: "We don't need the election campaign to know that Barak and [Amnon Lipkin-Shahak] are the safety net for all of [PA Chairman Yasser] Arafat's demands."

A leading Palestinian analyst, Khalil Shikaki, said that Qurei's remarks do not constitute a final decision on the matter. That still needs to be reached by Arafat and his deputy, Mahmoud Abbas, who will have the last word.

In the view of Shikaki, who heads the Center for Palestinian Research and Studies in Nablus, if Arafat backs off from the date without stringent conditions, it will constitute a devastating blow to the entire Palestinian national movement. The conditions are Israeli specification that statehood lies ahead, a total freeze on settlement activity, a substantial redeployment, and a "semi-state" status in which Palestinians control their borders.

"A state is the whole raison d'être of the Palestinian movement," Shikaki said. "If they don't declare, they will have to provide an answer. The whole credibility of the Palestinian movement becomes questionable. I think Hamas and Islamic Jihad are likely to see in this an indication of the collapse of the whole Palestinian national movement."

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Weizman denies meddling in elections

By BATSEVA TSUR

Beit Hanassi last night denied allegations that President Ezer Weizman had interfered in the electoral process by trying to influence Labor Party leader Ehud Barak and former chief of General Staff Amnon Lipkin-Shahak to run together "so as not to divide the Left."

The denial came hours after Likud politicians called for Weizman to be removed from office and followed sharp criticism from left-wing circles. Weizman, who has been talking with political leaders since the decision to hold early elections, then cancelled a planned meeting with Shahak yesterday morning.

According to the lead story in yesterday's *Ha'aretz*, Weizman had told "certain political figures" with whom he met in the past few days that unless the two joined forces, they would not be able to topple Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Weizman's bureau chief, Arye Shumer, described the report as "a journalistic fabrication." Questioned earlier about the report, Weizman had said that Barak and Shahak "are big boys. They can decide themselves what to do." He said he would not relate one way or the other to the report. "I'll behave myself, but I'll do what I

think is best for the State of Israel," he added.

But as the wave of protests grew, Weizman apparently felt obliged to deny the report.

Health Minister Yehoshua Mordechai said that he would not do so for 30 or 35 years, and he would not do such a thing. The idea of Barak and Shahak running together is good and they've attributed it to Weizman. He added that, if Weizman had nevertheless made such a remark in a private conversation, that is his prerogative "as long as he does not say this in public."

But not many others were prepared to come to the president's assistance. Meretz MK Dedi Zucker said that "the

Left is quite capable of getting to power by decent means," and without Weizman's help.

"The president has to keep out of politics if respect for the presidency is important to him. This is a violation of the presidential institution," Zucker said.

And to the Likud, he added that it had no right to criticize the president after the prime minister tried to replace him by running a candidate against him for the presidency for the first time in the country's history.

Weizman did hold another scheduled meeting - with Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai. According to Shumer, they discussed defense matters.

Expert: President has lost his credibility

By BATSEVA TSUR

"President Ezer Weizman is the boy who cried 'wolf,'" says Hebrew University political scientist Dr. Reuven Hazan. "When he really has something to say, no one will listen."

The primary role of the president, Hazan believes, "is to provide a symbol of unity, particularly in these troubled and divisive times and during an election campaign. Weizman's behavior in office, whether during Labor Party or Likud Party rule, has undermined the president's ability to be a unifying factor in Israeli politics."

In Hazan's opinion, the president has overstepped the mark, "and not for the first time... He's offended not only the Right, the Left and the religious, but other groups - such as women and homosexuals - too, which leads me to fear that should we face a truly divisive political crisis, there's no longer a political figure in Beit Hanassi who can come to the country's rescue."

By law, the president did have a political role before the introduction of the direct election of the prime minister, Hazan notes. Under the old system, the president decided on which MK to place the task of forming a government. This role has now changed and requires total objectivity.

"Under the new system, the prime minister can turn to the president to dissolve the Knesset if he cannot work with the Knesset. This puts the president between the legislative and executive branches of government," Hazan says. "For the president to decide between the two democratically elected branches of government, he must be above politics."

Hazan notes that such a possibility existed two weeks ago when the Knesset voted for early elections. "Netanyahu could have gone to Weizman to dissolve the Knesset. Weizman would then have been in the middle of the conflict - but with a tarnished image that doesn't unify the people of Israel. He has eroded the standing of the presidency; he should be above politics and save us from politics."

MKs ready bill seeking equal opportunities for women in IDF

By LIAT COLLINS

The Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee yesterday readied for first reading an equal opportunities bill under which all the jobs available to men in the IDF would also be open to women soldiers.

The bill was initiated by Meretz MKs Naomi Chazan, Ran Cohen and Anat Maor.

Chazan called the bill a "breakthrough which will contribute considerably towards establishing and strengthening the status of women in Israel in general and in the mili-

tary in particular."

The bill came the same week as the first woman in decades graduated from an IAF pilots course and was placed as a combat navigator in an F-16 squadron.

Sec.-Lt. Sheri is one of two women who have made it to the final stage of the pilots' course in a trial program ordered on the basis of a High Court ruling.

It was also the week the head of placement in the IAF manpower division, Brig.-Gen. Gil Regev, told a Knesset committee that it was "unnatural" for women to fly and it interferes with rearing children.

New law aids movie makers

By NINA GILBERT

A law that will boost state funding of the film industry from NIS 6 million to NIS 66m, annually was passed by the Knesset yesterday.

Under the Cinema Law, opposed by the government, 50 percent of the royalties paid to the Treasury from the Second Channel, cable broadcasters, and satellite television are to be channeled to a public institution that will oversee the spending and advance the industry.

"The law is a revolution for the film industry and will result in a breakthrough for putting Israel on the international cinema

map," said MK Yona Yahav (Labor), who heads the Knesset's cultural caucus. He said the industry would no longer have to be crippled by searches for funding.

Twenty-five people are to sit on the council, including 13 from the industry, and are to advise the education minister. The funding arrangements via the Industry and Trade Ministry are to be canceled, and the new law replaces the previous film industry encouragement law.

A group of actors who attended the Knesset session, including Gila Almagor, were ecstatic after the passage of the law, to take effect in one year.



President Ezer Weizman makes a point yesterday at Beit Hanassi to Greek Patriarch Diodoros I, as Latin Patriarch Michel Sabbah looks on.

President invites religious leaders to act for peace

By NAMI SHAPIRO

President Ezer Weizman yesterday told the country's Christian religious leaders they could contribute to the peace process.

Speaking at the president's New Year's reception for the heads of the Christian communi-

ties, Weizman said nothing is more important for Israel than reaching peace with its neighbors and that achieving an understanding with the Palestinians is the crux of the problem. He added that, deep down, he is confident peace would be achieved, because people realize they have no alternative to peace.

In an address peppered with phrases in Arabic, the president said the issue of Israel's future and the solution to the Palestinian problem would be a major factor in the upcoming election. He said he views the gathering of 180,000 Muslims to pray on the Temple Mount last Friday without disturbance as a promising sign.

"This is how peace should work. It is a good sign for the entire region," Weizman said. Deputy Religious Affairs Minister Yigal Bibi told the assembled Christian clerics they should unite with the chief rabbis and the heads of Islam to call for an end to war and bloodshed, at least during the year 2000.

CONVERSION

Continued from Page 1

Regev cited cases of "moderate" Orthodox rabbis telling an adopting family its adopted daughter would have to live an Orthodox lifestyle or a would-be convert that she had to leave the moshav she had made her home, as conditions for conversion.

Regev said he saw a political struggle looming and warned that the Reform and Conservative movements plan to enlist the full power of North American Jewry behind them. He said he expects an upsurge of pressure by the religious parties to pass the so-called conclusions of the Neeman Committee, recognizing the Chief Rabbinate as the sole arbiter on the validity of conversions performed here and calling for a con-

version institute in which all streams in Judaism would participate.

Regev said such a law would, in practice, disenfranchise the Reform and Conservative because it would give the rabbinate full legal authority, while not ensuring that the graduates of the institute would actually be converted by the rabbinate.

However, while Shas and the National Religious Party have adopted a pragmatic approach, supporting the Neeman Committee conclusions, United Torah Judaism could well oppose setting up the institute. In an editorial last week, *Yated Ne'eman*, the daily associated with Rabbi Eliezer Schach, spiritual mentor of the Degel Hatorah wing of UTJ, argued against granting even the shred of recognition to the non-Orthodox branches that setting up

the institute would imply.

Knesset Law Committee chairman Hanan Porat (NRP) described the decision as "judicial hijacking." He told a press conference in the Knesset that his committee would on Monday prepare the conversion bill, including the so-called Neeman compromise, for second and third readings.

Porat said the decision by a single district court judge, coming less than two months before an 11-judge bench is scheduled to discuss the non-Orthodox conversion of three children at Kibbutz Hanaton, is "an act verging on contempt of the High Court." He has asked the Attorney-General's Office to appeal the decision.

Meretz leader Yossi Sarid praised the decision as "courageous. Only an antisemitic country can discriminate between Jews because they are Reform or

Conservative and the Jerusalem court erased the antisemitic stain from the face of the Jewish state."

Meretz MK Naomi Chazan said the decision "opened a new era of enlightenment, openness, and tolerance. The ruling is a continuation of a series of important rulings starting with allowing women."

Reform, and Conservative Jews to sit on religious councils and bringing about true pluralism." Avraham Ravitz (UTJ) said he had predicted that such a decision would be made. "It did not surprise me, but it represents a view which could destroy the basis of our existence here. We have to hold on and struggle for the continued traditional existence of the Jewish people in Israel. The court forgot our special existence in Israel and we have to remind it," Ravitz said.

Politicians can make themselves heard

AT THE KNESSET

By LIAT COLLINS

tion for all children. Oshaya said in recent years the waiting list for such places has grown considerably.

Miscarriage of justice

MK Dedi Zucker (Meretz) is demanding the Law Committee ask the High Court why the trial of Dr. Gavriel Cana lasted eight years. Cana committed suicide this week, the day after being convicted of fraud.

"I don't believe it is possible to check the facts and discover the truth so many years after the events took place," said Zucker. "A trial that lasts so many years is not just and such twisted procedures must not be allowed to take place in Israel."

Urban annexation bill

Residents of small towns and villages which are to be annexed to larger urban centers would be

able to have a say concerning their future, under a bill being promoted by MK Avi Yehezkel (Labor). Yehezkel said residents should have a say in a public referendum, open to all above age 18 who have lived there for at least six months. He said the bill is aimed at preventing the merger between Mevasseret Zion and Jerusalem. The bill was readied for first reading yesterday by the Interior Committee, chaired by Micha Goldman (Labor).

Domestic violence in Arab sector

A subcommittee dealing with the status of women in the Arab sector yesterday called for funding projects against domestic violence in centers of Arab population, establishing more shelters for battered women and centers for the victims of sexual abuse, and establishing legal advice centers in Nazareth and Um el-Fahm.

Subcommittee chairwoman Tamar Gozansky (Hadash) called the session following two recent murders of Arab women by their husbands.

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سكرا من الاصل

Weizman de European Central Bank faces its debut

By BAT SHEVA TSUR

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The denial came hours after Likud politicians called for Weizman to be removed from office and followed sharp criticism from left-wing circles. Weizman, who has been talking with political leaders since the decision to hold early elections, then cancelled a planned meeting with Shahak yesterday morning.

According to the lead day's *Ha'aretz*, Weizman's political figures "will in the past few days they would join forces, they would topple Prime Minister Netanyahu."

Weizman's bureau chief described the report as fabrication.

Questioned earlier at Weizman had said that E "are big boys. They can do what they want to do." He related one way or the other "I'll behave myself, but

By JOHN THOR DAHLBERG

The bank, only 6 months old, has no deposits of its own and relatively few employees. The imitation leather furniture and potted ficus in the lobby might seem more at home in a neighborhood muffler repair shop.

But don't be mistaken: Western Europe's answer to the US Federal Reserve System, the new European Central Bank in Frankfurt, is immediately going to be one of the 400-kilos gorillas of global finance.

The ECB, and the national central banks in 11 Western European countries that it now officially leads, will have to manage a gigantic money mass worth \$4.2 trillion, or more than twice the annual US federal budget.

And over the next 3 years, the bank headquartered in an office tower in downtown Frankfurt, will be in charge of one of the most audacious economic projects of modern times: instituting a single currency, the euro, for 11 nations of Western Europe.

The new money officially comes into being January 1. In the first quarter of 1999, the European Central Bank will supervise the start of printing operations for a sum total of 13 billion euro banknotes in seven different denominations.

The plain-speaking Dutchman, Willem "Wim" Duisenberg, chosen as first president of the ECB executive board, should become as familiar a figure to Europeans, and many outsiders, as Alan Greenspan, Federal Reserve chairman, is to Americans.

His appointment was a messy, undignified affair that seemed to bode ill for the whole euro endeavor. Last May, at a European Union summit, French President Jacques Chirac filibustered for hours until Duisenberg, according to the French, agreed to serve only half of the ECB president's normal eight-year term.

France's objection was that the 63-year-old former chairman of the Netherlands' central bank was too close to the Germans.

Chirac said he got the deal he wanted, but Duisenberg lately has been saying he might stick around for the full eight years.

THE May events initially made it seem the ECB could be a cat's-paw for Western Europe's politicians.



A flower vendor sets price tags in francs and euros at the flower market in Nice this week. (AP)

Economic Cooperation and Development, a Paris-based planning group for the industrialized world, is already voicing some doubts.

Will the central bank of, say, Finland or Spain be willing to inflict genuine pain on the local economy for the good of Europe in general, the report asks. And, will the lopsided advantage in staff – more than 53,000 employees of the national central banks, versus 560 at the ECB – mean the national banks control information flow and forecasts, and to some extent the decisions?

(For comparison's sake, the US Federal Reserve has more than 23,000 people on its payroll.)

"Many tasks will be decentralized, because it's the 11 national banks that have the manpower," ECB spokeswoman Regina Karoline Schueller said. "We're confident we know what we're doing."

HEIR to a monetary institute that began planning January 1, 1994, for the euro, the ECB opened for business June 1 in a 23-year-old office building christened "Eurotower" in its honor.

It has no assets, and salaries, rent and other expenses are paid from interest on a \$4.6 billion fund created for the purpose by the national central banks.

Ironically, though Britain is one of four European Union members not adopting the euro on January 1, English quickly has become the working language at the ECB.

On October 13, the bank defined its task as keeping Europe's inflation rate, now running at a postwar low of 0.7 percent in Germany, to 2 percent a year or less.

Some market watchers think there will have to be additional interest rate cuts in early 1999 to make credit easier and pump more money into Europe's economies to counter flagging growth.

Duisenberg, though, has made it clear that he wants to keep the current rate in the near term. And even before the euro's official debut, he has put participating governments on notice that the European Central Bank is determined to act as it alone sees fit.

Politicians are certainly free to give advice to the ECB, the Dutch central banker said, but "it would be very abnormal if these suggestions were to be listened to."

(Los Angeles Times)

MKs ready bill seeking equal opportunities for women in IDF

By LIAT COLLINS

The Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee yesterday readied for first reading an equal opportunities bill under which all the jobs available to men in the IDF would also be open to women soldiers.

The bill was initiated by Meretz MKs Naomi Chazan, Ran Cohen and Anat Maor.

Chazan called the bill a "breakthrough which will contribute considerably towards establishing and strengthening the status of women in Israel in general and in the military in particular."

The bill came the same week the first woman in decades graduated from an IAF pilots course as was placed as a combat navigator in an F-16 squadron.

Sec.-Lt. Sheri is one of two women who have made it to the final stage of the pilots' course in a program ordered on the basis of a High Court ruling.

It was also the week the head placement in the IAF manpower division, Brig.-Gen. Gil Regev, to a Knesset committee that it was "unnatural" for women to fly and interferes with rearing children.

New law aids movie makers

By NINA GILBERT

A law that will boost state funding of the film industry from NIS 6 million to NIS 66m, annually was passed by the Knesset yesterday.

Under the Cinema Law, opposed by the government, 50 percent of the royalties paid to the Treasury from the Second Channel, cable broadcasters, and satellite television are to be channeled to a public institution that will oversee the spending and advance the industry.

"The law is a revolution for the film industry and will result in a breakthrough for putting Israel on the international cinema

map," said MK Yona Yaho (Labor), who heads the Knesset cultural caucus. He said the industry would no longer have to be crippled by searches for funding.

Twenty-five people are to sit on the council, including 13 from the industry, and are to advise the education minister. The funding arrangements via the Industry and Trade Ministry are to be canceled, and the new law replace the previous film industry encouragement law.

A group of actors who attend the Knesset session, including Gila Almagor, were ecstatic after the passage of the law, to take effect in one year.

CONVERSION

Continued from Page 1

Regev cited cases of "moderate" Orthodox rabbis telling an adopting family its adopted daughter would have to live an Orthodox lifestyle or a would-be convert that she had to leave the moshav she had made her home, as conditions for conversion.

Regev said he saw a political struggle looming and warned that the Reform and Conservative movements plan to enlist the full power of North American Jewry behind them. He said he expects an upsurge of pressure by the religious parties to pass the so-called conclusions of the Neeman Committee, recognizing the Chief Rabbinate as the sole arbiter on the validity of conversions performed here and calling for a conversion institute in which streams in Judaism would participate.

Regev said such a law would, in practice, disenfranchise the Reform and Conservative because it would give the rabbinic authority, while not ensuring that the graduates of the institute would actually be converted to the rabbinic.

However, while Shas and the National Religious Party have adopted a pragmatic approach supporting the Neeman Committee conclusions, United Torah Judaism could well oppose setting up the institute. In an editorial last week, *Yated Ne'ema* the daily associated with Rabbi Eliezer Schach, spiritual mentor of the Degel Hatorah wing of UTJ, argued against granting even a shred of recognition to the Orthodox branches that setting

up a conversion institute in which streams in Judaism would participate.

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Is Saddam trying to raise the ante?

Iraq's actions in the days since Operation Desert Fox have, in some ways, been as unpredictable as when the raids were under way. Howard Schneider reports from Cairo

If there are any clues to why Iraq fired on American warplanes Monday in northern Iraq, they might be found in the comparative lack of resistance put up by the Iraqi military during four days of heavy bombardment earlier this month.

After restricting his forces to a largely ineffective effort to shoot down cruise missiles with anti-aircraft guns during Operation Desert Fox, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein may now be trying to show Iraqis and the world that he can still mount a response – a demonstration at least partly demanded by Iraq's internal politics.

Perhaps more importantly, he may also be starting to reveal how he plans to try to turn the US-led missile and bomb strikes, which ended December 19, to his advantage. Far from compromising, his plan may be to keep pushing his dispute with the Middle East and the world to its limits, expecting

that at some point the costs of enforcing sanctions, "no-fly" zones and other restrictions on Iraq will be seen as more trouble than they are worth.

"Saddam has a clear interest in showing he was not cowed by the air strikes and in raising the ante," said Patrick Clawson, director of research for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. "And that is exactly what he is doing. ... He thinks that he can chip away at the restrictions and win some compromises."

Iraq's actions in the days since Operation Desert Fox ended have, in some ways, been as unpredictable as when the raids were under way.

Over the weekend, Iraq reported incursions by hostile aircraft in southern Iraq, though both the British and Americans insisted no planes had been sent there at that time. And once before Monday's incident in the north, Western pilots in the southern

no-fly zone reported seeing anti-aircraft fire in the distance.

At the same time, Saddam's government has refused to allow the United Nations to resume the weapons inspections required before international sanctions against Iraq can be lifted.

Iraqi officials have also threatened to halt the UN program under which their country can sell its oil to pay for food and medicine, and have given conflicting signals about the fate of the hundreds of UN humanitarian workers there who not only oversee that program but direct education, health and nutrition projects.

Though important to a country laboring under a stiff economic embargo, these programs are also regarded as an intrusion on its sovereignty and a sign of its inability to use its oil wealth as it chooses.

Ultimately, Saddam's goal is to have the eight-year-old sanctions lifted, an aim he promised last

spring to fulfill by the end of this year. While there is substantial sympathy, particularly among Arab countries, for finding some way to relax the embargo – a sentiment heightened by Desert Fox – Monday's incident near Mosul seemed to have little or no connection to that goal.

RATHER, Clawson suggested, his more immediate aim may be to eliminate the no-fly zones.

Established by the Western allies after the Persian Gulf War to shield Iraq's Shi'ite Muslims in the south and its ethnic Kurds in the north, the zones have been only sporadically challenged by Iraq, allowing the West to keep them intact with minimal effort and danger.

Opposing US and British policing efforts with consistent anti-aircraft fire or by staging prohibited military flights would require a more sustained effort to enforce the no-fly rules – and raise the prospect of repeated missile strikes against Iraqi anti-aircraft batteries or planes.

Given growing discomfort in the Arab world with an Iraqi pol-

icy that is viewed by some as punitive, that may be hard to justify.

While the no-fly zones are supported by countries such as Turkey and Saudi Arabia with a vested interest in border security, they were instituted by the US and a handful of allies, not by the United Nations or some other international body.

In countries like Egypt, Operation Desert Fox left many leaders calling for the US and Britain not to take matters into their own hands, but to follow whatever policy is set by the UN Security Council.

The attacks may also, analysts suggested, be partly meant to bolster Saddam's stature with the Iraqi military after a missile attack to which they were largely unable to respond.

As the attack started, Baghdad newspapers took the unusual step of acknowledging that Iraq's inferior technology left its military vulnerable – a surprising admission in a country often adamant about insisting on the superiority of its culture to others.

(The Washington Post)

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Lott sets blueprint for Clinton trial

By LARRY MARGASAK

WASHINGTON (AP) — House prosecutors say they want to call witnesses at President Bill Clinton's impeachment trial, which could begin January 7 under a blueprint that Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott proposed to Democrats.

The all-Republican prosecution team, holding its first strategy session Tuesday, did not decide who might be summoned to testify before the Senate, several of its members said. The House now must await a Senate timetable and a decision on whether witnesses will be permitted.

In interviews with The Associated Press, neither Lott nor Senate Democratic leader Tom Daschle endorsed the plan of the 13-member

prosecution team to call witnesses. Lott said he believes a trial could be held without witnesses. "Are witnesses required? I don't think so," he told the AP.

Senators from both parties have said they wanted to avoid a trial longer than several weeks, and it was unclear whether a decision to allow witnesses would make a quick trial impossible.

Sen. Mike DeWine (R-OH), said yesterday that censuring Clinton would weaken the presidency.

If a Senate trial is short-circuited by censure, the president's defenders would view the House impeachment vote as "a naked exercise of partisan political power," but would never have a chance to win acquittal for Clinton, DeWine said. "And those

who wish to remove the president will forever be denied the opportunity to be heard by the Senate.

"Denied the closure of a trial, I fear that censure would not end the civic ugliness in which we are currently mired," he said.

Lott has begun addressing a timetable, said a Senate Democratic leadership source. Lott told Daschle that the trial could get its ceremonial start on January 7, with senators getting sworn in as jurors by Chief Justice William Rehnquist, the source said. The trial could begin in earnest January 11, under Lott's plan. The source said Daschle (D-SD), has not agreed to the dates and neither has the White House. But the proposal shows that the Senate is prepared to move fast to try Clinton on two

articles of impeachment — accusing him of grand jury perjury and obstruction of justice in attempting to conceal an extramarital affair with former White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

Rep. Bill McCollum (R-FL), a senior member of the team of so-called managers, said a consensus emerged on calling witnesses without any formal votes in Tuesday's closed-door session.

"There was no show of hands. But I am anticipating, based on everything we've discussed in there today, that there would be witnesses, we would present witnesses. I don't think there's any question about that," he told reporters.

Although no one was discussing names publicly, potential witnesses conceivably could include Ms.

Lewinsky, presidential secretary Betty Currie, and presidential friend Vernon Jordan.

Lott said he wants senators to vote on removing Clinton from office before seriously considering censure as an alternative. "I would prefer that there would be a vote on the articles of impeachment," he said.

Daschle said the question about witnesses hadn't been resolved. "It's fair to say that Senator Lott and I are both comfortable with proceeding without witnesses," he said, adding that it was a matter that would have to be discussed in party caucuses.

He also said he has asked some senators to draft censure resolutions. "There are a lot of different wordings. There are a lot of different scenarios," he said.

Missiles fired over southern Iraq

WASHINGTON (AP) — US warplanes fired missiles and laser-guided bombs on a defense site in southern Iraq early yesterday after it fired six to eight missiles at a British aircraft, government officials said.

The US and British planes returned to their bases safely, Pentagon officials said, in what was the second American-Iraqi missile exchange in a no-fly zone since Monday.

At the White House, a senior administration official said that Iraq fired the surface-to-air missiles at the British aircraft. US aircraft responded by firing two missiles and several laser-guided munitions at the Iraqi air defense station.

President Bill Clinton was briefed by his National Security Council advisers before flying to a South Carolina resort to begin a holiday vacation.

"Our allied aircraft will continue to enforce the no-fly zones vigorously," said David Leavy, a White House spokesman. "As the president has said, they are a key element of our containment policy."

Leavy said the incident "underscores the continued threat that Saddam [Hussein] poses to the region. We will take the necessary precautions to carry out our mission and to protect our air crews."

At the Pentagon, spokesman Col. Richard Bridges said 20 US fighters and electronic warfare planes and four British bombers were patrolling the Iraqi skies when the incident occurred, a normal presence for a no-fly mission.

Asked if any Iraqi missiles came close to any Western aircraft, Bridges said, "I have no indication they were anywhere near successful."

He said the Iraqis often don't turn on targeting radar until the last second — making it almost impossible to score a hit — because the anti-aircraft site doesn't want to draw a radar-seeking missile response.

"I'm sure Saddam is hoping he's going to get lucky at some point," Bridges said. "We have robust rules of engagement that allow us to defend ourselves adequately."

For now, it appears that Iraq is simply taunting US and British planes in the no-fly zone by throwing up missiles as part of a campaign to challenge the tight UN and American controls on the country, according to foreign policy experts.

Although Iraq, which doesn't accept the legitimacy of the no-fly zones, has claimed it is now operating aircraft in the off-limits regions, Bridges said there have been no reported sightings of Iraqi planes in the region in the past few days.



Monumental strike
A Japanese tourist takes a picture of his son yesterday in front of Paris' Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Arc de Triomphe, whose staff was on strike for a fifth day. (AP)

Leaders roasted over Cyprus S-300 backdown

NICOSIA (Reuters) — Cyprus President Glafcos Clerides and Greek Prime Minister Costas Karamanlis took a political roasting yesterday after Cyprus dropped its cherished plan to bring Russian-built anti-aircraft missiles onto the divided island.

But Western allies of Greece and Turkey heaved a sigh of relief at a move expected to cool tensions between two NATO partners as the S-300 missiles stood packed and ready for shipment from a Russian port.

Turkey, which sponsors a breakaway Turkish Cypriot mini-state, had threatened to destroy the missiles if they were deployed on the island.

It said yesterday they would still increase tensions in the Aegean if they were sent to Crete, as Greece and Cyprus now intend.

"I find it incredibly wrong that one NATO member country should bring missiles to threaten another NATO country," Turkish Foreign Minister Ismail Cem told a news conference in Ankara.

Cypriot socialist leader Vassos Lyssarides launched a move to pull his EDEK party out of Clerides' administration, saying the decision would be seen as bowing to "Turkish blackmail."

Alekos Alavanos, a European parliament deputy for Greece's Coalition of the Left, said: "It is like ordering a bathtub for your house and being forced to put it in the neighbor's house."

Athens Radio Flash mocked the decision as a half-measure, suggesting the S-300s be renamed S-150s.

Austria, holder of the European Union's rotating presidency, said the decision showed the EU had been correct to put Cyprus on the fast track to membership — a move which was deeply resented by Turkey.

Germany, which takes the presidency Friday, called for cuts in "the dangerously high level of weaponry on Cyprus" and urged Turkey, which has 30,000 troops on the island, to reduce its military presence.

Britain, which still has air bases on its former island colony, and the US, which has been trying for years to mediate a settlement of the Cyprus conflict, welcomed the decision when it was announced by Clerides Tuesday after a trip to Athens for talks with Simitis.

Former hostages say Yemeni troops started fatal shootout

ADEN (AP) — Tourists freed after a shoot-out that killed four colleagues said yesterday that the battle started when Yemeni security forces attacked the Islamic radicals who were holding them hostage.

Their accounts appeared to contradict a Yemeni government statement, which said security forces only opened fire Tuesday after the kidnappers began killing some of the hostages at a camp in southern Yemen.

The hostages said that once the attack began, the kidnappers tried to use their prisoners as shields and eventually shot two of them in "revenge killings" as they fled.

"The worst time for me was that time when a barrel was pointed at my chest. I said, 'No, no, no,'" recounted Erik Firkin, who said a fellow captive, a woman, was shot dead in front of him by a kidnapper.

Three Britons and an Australian were killed in the siege, and two women, an American and a Briton, were wounded. Yemen's Interior Ministry said its forces killed three of the kidnappers and



Eric Firkin (AP)

Both men said their group wound up in the middle of a gun battle after government troops opened fire on the kidnappers as they fled with their hostages.

"We were being led into the mountains to a hiding. Then we heard the gunfire," said Firkin, a chemistry professor.

Smith, 52, said the gun battle went on for about two hours, with bullets whizzing over the heads of the hostages.

One of the wounded, Claire Marston of Britain, was "in a very bad way," British diplomat David Pearce told reporters.

Marston had surgery on her shoulder — where she was shot — and knew that her husband Peter Rowe had been killed, Pearce said.

The other woman, an unidentified American, was shot in the pelvis, hospital officials said.

Yemeni officials said one of those captured was the leader of the group, Osama Masri of Egypt. In Cairo, Egyptian security sources said the name was the alias of a wanted Islamic extremist.

WORLD

in brief

Chechnya's president: Warlords can't remove me

MOSCOW (AP) — Chechnya's president said yesterday that warlords attempting to drive him from office would not succeed because he still has the support of the people who had elected him.

President Aslan Maskhadov has seen many of his former allies turn against him in recent months and mount a concerted campaign to remove him as leader.

But Maskhadov said it would prove impossible "to crush a popularly elected president," the ITAR-Tass news agency reported.

Maskhadov was a top guerrilla commander in the 1994-96 war against Russia, and he won an overwhelming election victory shortly after the war ended and the Russian troops left. But he's been unable to bring law and order to Chechnya or rebuild the fractured economy.

Grand jury indicts 1 in Oklahoma City bombing

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — A county grand jury that investigated the Oklahoma City bombing and a shadowy network of white supremacists returned one indictment yesterday.

Details of the indictment were not immediately available as District Judge Bill Burkett read the grand jury's lengthy report out loud in the courtroom.

"We have returned one indictment. We leave other charging decisions in this matter to the appropriate authorities," the report said.

South Africans rush to reclaim confiscated land

CAPE TOWN (AP) — South African officials have been swamped as thousands of blacks rushed to file claims before today's deadline to reclaim land confiscated during white rule.

Officials at the Department of Land Affairs told the Cape Times newspaper yesterday that some regional offices had received more than 1,000 calls in recent days from people seeking to press their claims.

Land Affairs Director-General Geoff Budlender said a total of about 40,000 claims would be registered by the cutoff point.

In the past, colonial governments and then apartheid rulers confiscated the best land for whites, crowding millions of blacks into tiny tribal homelands unable to support such large populations.

Mother of octuplets: 'I did it for love'

HOUSTON (AP) — After paying a visit to her seven surviving babies, Nkem Chukwu said yesterday she suffered the discomfort and difficulty of carrying octuplets for one reason — for love.

Chukwu spoke publicly for the first time as she prepared to leave the hospital, three months after entering to wait for the birth of her eight babies. She looked frail but happy, as she and her husband, Iyke Louis Udobi, addressed reporters.

"It wasn't easy, but I did it for the love I have for them. 'I knew one day it will be over.'"

The seven surviving octuplets — the lightest, Odera, died Sunday — remained in critical but stable condition. Four were breathing on their own, while three needed help from ventilators. They're expected to remain hospitalized for at least three months.

Cambodia's king won't approve amnesty for Khmer Rouge

By CHRIS FONTAINE

PHNOM PENH, Cambodia (AP) — Cambodia's king refused yesterday to approve an amnesty for two Khmer Rouge leaders, even though the nation's autocratic prime minister has promised to shield them from trial.

The refusal casts doubt on the legitimacy of the deal Prime Minister Hun Sen made with Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea to defect to the government in exchange for assurances they will not be tried for crimes against humanity.

"Taking into account the very wide and undeniable discontent of the majority of the Khmer people, I announce to this majority that I respect them and will not renew my power of amnesty for major Khmer Rouge criminals," King Norodom Sihanouk said in a dispatch from Beijing, where he is receiving medical treatment.

"From now on, I leave all the responsibility to Hun Sen of handling this unfortunate and dramatic affair of pardons accorded to the Khmer Rouge," he said. "I will sign no more decrees concerning the Khmer Rouge."

Whether Hun Sen would go ahead with the amnesty was unclear.

Although the 76-year-old Sihanouk is popular in Cambodia, he is largely a figurehead.

Hun Sen, however, is Cambodia's most powerful man and his will amounts to law. He controls the judiciary and security services and could accord the pair a de facto pardon, possibly through the pliant court system.

Sihanouk said an international tribunal would have "the perfect right to take up the case of genocide in Cambodia, because it concerns crimes against humanity."

His announcement came hours after the two Khmer Rouge leaders apologized for the deaths of as many as two million people during their brutal 1975-79 regime and asked Cambodians to forget the past.

Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea, members of the inner circle of the late Khmer Rouge leader Pol Pot, have stayed in a luxury hotel since coming to Phnom Penh on Tuesday to cement their deal.

Their families are touring the temples and palaces of a capital emptied at gunpoint in 1975, when the Khmer Rouge forced Cambodians into rural slave labor camps.

Libya orders arrest of 9 Americans in '86 air attack

CAIRO (AP) — In a symbolic move, a Libyan prosecutor yesterday ordered the arrest of nine American officials allegedly behind the 1986 bombing of two Libyan cities, a news agency reported.

Among those on the list is the late William Casey, the former director of the CIA, Egypt's Middle East News Agency reported. Former president Ronald Reagan, who ordered the bombing, was not on the list, it said.

The announcement came as Libya is maneuvering over American and British demands that two Libyan suspects be turned over for trial in the Netherlands for the 1988 bombing of a Pan Am jet, which killed 270 people.

MENA said the prosecutor, Mohammed Abdel-Wahab, announced the arrest orders at a news conference at the People's Court in the Libyan capital of Tripoli.

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Politician or president

It may be true, as some have claimed, that the direct election of the prime minister has created a quasi-presidential political system in Israel, but that does not mean that the role of the president has been either diminished or enhanced. The president of the State of Israel still has a very important purpose to fulfill as a national figure who remains above the rough-and-tumble of politics. The direct meddling in matters political recently exhibited by President Ezer Weizman represents a dangerous departure from the normal tasks of the office. If such political activity is allowed to continue, the integrity of the presidency will be tarnished and its stature diminished, to the detriment of all.

Weizman has in his six years in office acquired a well-deserved reputation as the most political president in Israel's history. But even in contrast to other controversies in which he has been involved, the reports that Weizman has been working hard to persuade Labor Party chairman Ehud Barak and political newcomer Lt.-Gen. (res.) Amnon Lipkin-Shahak to join forces, instead of running against each other, really indicate that Weizman has lost all sense of proportion regarding what he is properly allowed and not allowed to do as long as he occupies Beit Hanassi. The emergence of Shahak as a potentially major electoral force has been shaking the political system for weeks now, and Shahak's selection of allies and running-mates is obviously going to have serious effects, both in the election for prime minister and the coalition-building that will take place after the votes are counted after the elections on May 17. Any influence the president may have on Shahak's decisions therefore translates into influence on the choice put before the voter on election day and on the practical results of the vote. This is political meddling of the clearest sort.

The last-minute cancellation yesterday of Weizman's scheduled meeting with Shahak was a rather lame attempt at crisis-control on the part of his office, which barely even blunted the criticism that rightly came from all sides - from Likud Health Minister Yehoshua Matza and Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert on the Right all the way to Meretz MK Dedi Zucker on the Left. The office of president was conceived 50 years ago as a ceremonial position roughly akin to that of the governor-general in the countries of the British Commonwealth. As head of state, the president may be at the top of the protocol list when it comes to officially representing the country, but in actual fact his powers are severely limited. Aside from the task of selecting the Knesset member who will form a new government upon the termination of a previous gov-

ernment - a role which was actually cancelled two years ago with the adoption of the direct election of the prime minister - and the authority to grant pardons, the president's position is largely form devoid of content. As the first president, Ezer Weizman's uncle Chaim Weizmann learned while chafing under the strictures of the job that true power resides with the prime minister. The concept of the presidency being reserved not for power-wielding politicians, but rather men of arts and sciences, was perfectly exemplified by the offer made to and politely refused by Albert Einstein - who was far removed from politics as possible - to assume the office after Chaim Weizmann's death.

This is not to say that the president cannot use the trappings of his office to play an important national role. Indeed, the distance the president is expected to maintain from politics can be an advantage. Various Israeli presidents have made wise use of the opportunities given them to serve as a unifying force in times of trouble or grief, and as a symbol all citizens can share and turn to. The numerous positive movements for change in Israeli society which began with a symbolic presence outside Beit Hanassi, rather than more politically charged locations in Jerusalem, testify to the importance of the presidency as national symbol. The problem begins when the presidency is regarded as a perk to be given to politicians who various interests would like to see kicked upstairs, rather than to national and apolitical figures. Politicians by their nature have well developed egos and have a hard time imagining themselves removed from positions of direct influence. Hence the temptation to exceed the limits of the office.

Ezer Weizman has always been a mercurial political figure, who began spouting off on political matters even before he retired from the air force as a major-general. During his political career, ranging all the way from being Menachem Begin's heir-apparent at one point to occupying one of the most dovish positions in the Labor Party, he could always be counted on to shoot from the hip and do something controversial. It was therefore usually with a modicum of understanding that his penchant for sometimes overstepping the strictures of the presidency was received in the past, even as he irked a succession of prime ministers. His popularity with the people has also served him well.

This time, however, by so baldly meddling in what could be fateful political matters, Weizman has gone beyond what even his admirers can tolerate. He needs to decide whether he wants to be a politician or the president. Mixing both is bound to harm the presidency, an important position Israel would be ill-advised to lose.

Uniform fetish

DANIEL DORON

Like successive marriages, the blind faith of Israelis that "clean, new" leadership will set all wrongs right represents the triumph of hope over experience. Again and again, our statist distributive system corrupts politics and brings out the worst, even in the best. Rampant statism has ground the Soviet empire to dust, and caused us disaster after disaster. Yet, after each catastrophe, we search amidst the rubble for a new white hope, clinging to the illusion that given the "right" leadership, Israel can revive itself without paying the painful cost of true reform.

Each time we swear never to trust politicians again, but then follow, like enchanted children, the latest pied piper: Yigal Allon, Moshe Dayan, Yitzhak Rabin, Ezer Weizman or Yitzhak Rabin - all, incidentally, ex-generals. Israelis obviously prefer their saviors in mufti. This despite ample evidence that generals, with few exceptions, make poor civilian leaders, and even though our generals, judging by our army's cost and performance, have little to crow about.

In fact, some of Israel's greatest calamities occurred when martial men were at the helm.

Yet, we seem unable to resist the belief that by some magic, the sheer force of a "clean" leader's personality will create a land of milk-pure politics and honey-sweet prosperity, delivering everything for free: free education, free welfare, free medicine, free dreams.

W.C. Fields opined that new suckers are born every minute, so charlatans will always prosper. In Israel, blind faith seems so ingrained that the stock of suckers doesn't even need replenishing.

How else could Amnon Lipkin-Shahak garner so much support before even making any promises, simply because he seems to be a really nice guy with a winning demi-smile; how could Ronni Milo, a failed mayor who could

not even collect garbage efficiently, seem a serious contender, just because he rails against the Orthodox?

True, in contrast to most of our politicians, just being a nice guy must seem a great virtue; and railing against the haredim seems like a positive action plan compared to the pablum of meaningless generalities offered by others.

And Shahak may, in fact, turn out to be even more than the mere amiable, reliable, "strong-quiet-type" father figure that so many apparently yearn for. An ex-chief of staff, a man of proven bravery, he has many admiring friends (in the right places) and not too many enemies.

But would it not be more prudent if, before placing our destiny in his hands, we asked a few questions and learned how good a chief of staff he really was, and whether the claims of his critics are plain calumny or have some substance?

OUR army, as anyone who serves in the reserves knows, is not exactly the paragon of good management; perhaps it cannot be. But whatever happened to the much touted "small but efficient and smart fighting force" first promised by Shahak's predecessor, Ehud Barak (whose own record as chief of staff ought to also pass serious scrutiny)?

If generals fail to accomplish their goals in the military, where they command others to do their bidding, why would they be more successful in our dysfunctional political environment? Should military leaders not be held accountable for the army's less-than-stellar performance and the many mishaps and accidents that regularly plague it? Does it not say something about their leadership?

There is, moreover, a nagging feeling that the army, like politicians and the senior government bureaucracy, has become a part of those interlocking elites that dominate our all-pervasive public sec-

Dry Bones



tor, as well as our so-called "private sector," that is still so dependent on government granted monopoly rents and other "arrangements" that it cannot be considered really private.

It is difficult to recall any former generals who have implemented a reform or agitated for change in any of the fields they have entered, or even many that particularly distinguished themselves as managers.

In fact, the same brave pilots who have risked their life while in service, the same brave army doctors and other dauntless fighters have acted, once in civilian life, in a lawless devil-may-care manner in pursuit of their sectorial interests, proving that our system is able to corrupt even the best of men.

Indeed, even while he spoke

about the need for change, Shahak, in his capacity as a director of Teva, did not hesitate to vote to keep Eli Hurwitz as chairman of the board, though he was convicted of a felony.

Nor does he seem embarrassed at trying to piece together a party with candidates whose positions are known to be worlds apart.

True reform of our destructive system will require breaking the stranglehold of our old elites and their corrupting arrangements. It is highly doubtful that this will be accomplished by "one of the boys," by someone dependent for campaign financing and for political clout on the very same "guys from the Jacuzzi" who run the old cozy system - however noble and sincere his intentions may be.

Netanyahu's test

URI DAN, DENNIS EISENBERG

The very destiny of the Jewish state could be decided within the next four months.

Much rests on whether or not Binyamin Netanyahu can prove he is more than a glib TV performer. That he will cease dithering. And that he will make up his mind to combine oratory with positive action.

The insidious dangers of Israelis demeaning themselves, seeking outsiders to help solve their political problems, mount on all sides. Already Labor leader Ehud Barak leans heavily on American spin-doctors on how to persuade Israelis to vote for him. What need is there for foreigners - when he has a choice of five million fellow citizens who can give all the advice he needs for the next two thousand years.

In this matter, Netanyahu too is guilty. CIA operatives check whether Arab terrorists have been imprisoned by Yasser Arafat as agreed at Wye River. Without much success it seems. They still "escape" with the greatest of ease.

The majority of Israelis in the national camp - stigmatized as "right wing" - have during the past two years been thrown into disarray by Netanyahu's persistent and fruitless pursuit of the "center" by speaking from both cor-

ners of his mouth at the same time.

On the one hand, he claims he is determined to stand firm on Palestinians' living up to their commitments to stop terrorism, arrest known killers of Jews, cease infidels' street violence, surrender illegal arms and disarm the grossly overmanned Palestinian militia, which each passing day resembles a full-blown army.

Yet this very week Netanyahu's lack of resolve was demonstrated at the Palestinian airport in Gaza where, by mutual agreement, Israeli security officials have the right - and duty - to check incoming planes. When the Palestinians refused to allow the security officials to examine an Egyptian plane, Israel gave way - and there was no check carried out or efforts made to resolve the mystery concerning reports of four unidentified passengers on the aircraft. When is Netanyahu going to stand firm on Israeli rights? Time is short - every day of supine lack of purpose and real leadership qualities could drive a nail into his political coffin.

IN essence, Netanyahu faces two major rivals for the premiership: Ehud Barak and Amnon Lipkin-

Shahak. Both were highly successful army commanders - Barak in the Sayeret Matkal elite unit and Shahak, a paratrooper commander. Both became chiefs of General Staff.

But in truth neither made a deep impression in that role. Neither man came up with a military answer to the Lebanese problem. So there is precious little reason for either of them to even pretend they were of the same giant-like stature of a Yitzhak Rabin or Moshe Dayan in that role.

Barak's Operation Accountability in 1993 involving air strikes and Shahak's Grapes of Wrath onslaught by both artillery and air strikes, were failures. Neither of them came up with a military plan to handle the wave of suicide bombings after the Oslo Accords.

Both Barak and Shahak are politically left wing. Both championed Rabin's Oslo Accords and were major figures in politicizing the armed forces. Barak has proved an ineffectual leader of the Labor Party. Shahak is yet to comment on anything, let alone on any issue which as a prospective prime minister is important to the country.

Allied with them as a Netanyahu

rival is Dan Meridor, a self-styled prince of the Likud who was and still is in a pique about not being granted greater honor by "his" party.

The onus of ensuring that Israel will continue to be a genuine sovereign state and have the courage and determination to stand up to external pressure now rests squarely on Netanyahu's shoulders. For a start, he must convince the voters who chose him two years ago that he will no longer treat them as idiots.

For instance, he has repeatedly made tough speeches about Jerusalem remaining a united city with the right to build anywhere within its boundaries. But to this day, not a single foundation stone has been set in place in the Har Homa neighborhood. Netanyahu talks about his commitment to the settlements, but there has been less activity there in the past two years than under the previous Labor administration.

Netanyahu faces the biggest challenge of his life in the coming weeks. Not only personally, but as prime minister of Israel. Is he big enough and courageous enough to prove himself worthy of the title by bold decisions and deeds? That matters not only to him personally, but to every single man, woman and child who lives in this country.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ONLY FAIR

Sir, - Reading of David Levy's impending union with the Labor Party reminds me of an aphorism attributed to Winston Churchill. On the eve of the Second World War Churchill was advised that this war wouldn't be like the Great War that preceded it as the Italians would now be allied with the Germans.

"That's only fair," said Churchill. "We had them last time."

Petah Tikva.

L. REYERD

FUTILE SWATTING

Sir, - My dear friend Mark Heller eloquently states the case for withdrawing IDF troops from Lebanon in "A Bizarre Situation," (December 25). Let me respond with an analogy: Your neighbor is a beekeeper, who periodically for self-serving reasons looses his bees into your yard. Despite repeated requests by you, he continues to loose his swarms upon you. Is the answer to hopelessly keep swatting at the bees or to take concrete, forceful action against the beekeeper?

You are right, Mark. It is futile to keep swatting at Hizbullah. We must go after the beekeeper, Hafez Assad!

MICHAEL D. HIRSCH

Kochav Yair.

APING AMERICAN CULTURE

Sir, - As if it were not enough that our children are exposed to many hours of watching American films on TV, here comes the mental onslaught of English study textbooks for our schoolchildren compiled by American immigrant teachers.

I am referring specifically to *Radio Fever* for Grade 8, both in content and graphics as alien to Israeli youngsters as can be. Of what interest, for example, may the "Memories of 1968," the American non-conformist youth rebellion, be to a 14-year old Israeli pupil in 1998? Or the results of a baseball game between two American teams as many years ago.

The chopped up, fragmentary presentation of reading items, the loud, distracting illustrations, all add to the shallowness, the lack of cohesion of the "stories." Needless to say, the vocabulary of these pseudo-journalistic pieces contains a lot of pretentious, useless balast.

How could our Ministry of Education approve of such a textbook for our schoolchildren, unless it, too, like many Israeli consumers, has succumbed to the prevailing trend of aping some of the least desirable aspects of what passes for "American culture."

PNINA GOLDNER

Retired supervisor and English teacher.

Kiryat Haim.

DEROGATORY STATEMENTS

Derogatory statements, Mr. Rosenblum, are not restricted to the Left only. By the way, I did not hear this rabbi say that about *ba'alei teshuva* (the newly observant).

A while ago I heard a prominent Los Angeles rabbi, who was also at the recent Agudah conference in New Jersey, tell his congregation in a Shabbat sermon to be careful of "contaminating" their children by exposing them to *ba'alei teshuva*.

Jerusalem.

GITA HURWITZ

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

65 years ago: On December 31, 1933, *The Palestine Post* reported on the installation of the third turbine at the hydro-electric plant of the Palestine Electric Corporation at Naharayim on the Jordan River, bringing the total horsepower in use to 30,000. A room had been set up for the fourth turbine.

50 years ago: On December 31, 1948, *The Palestine Post* reported that two Egyptian planes had been shot down in the Negev. At the UN Security Council deliberations the British delegations complained that Israeli forces, pressing the retreating Egyptians hard, had already crossed the international border.

25 years ago: On December 31, 1973, *The Jerusalem Post* reported that Israel's armed forces were on a special alert as the nation prepared to go to the polls to choose the Eighth Knesset and about 140 heads of the local councils.

Alexander Zvielli

1501 من الامم

Weekender

Will Smith just gets bigger

Hit movies,
hit albums...
What will
he do next?

By NEKESA MUMBI MOODY

According to the rules of physics—and Hollywood—everything that goes up must come down.

So after a string of career highs—a hit TV show, two blockbuster movies and a multiplatinum rap career—Will Smith admits he's a "little nervous" with the release of his latest project, the thriller *Enemy of the State*, which premieres tonight at Israeli theaters and opens countrywide next Thursday.

"I'm not missing too much," he said recently, as he sipped coffee at an upscale New York hotel. "Film after film I'm scoring and people are reacting well, so it's not like I'm going to be down. I'm trying to make them as much as I can."

Earlier, he's doing a pretty good job. The Philadelphia native first made waves as part of the rap act DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince, then parlayed that success into the television series, *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, which ended its six-year run in 1996.

Smith won acclaim with his debut role as a bisexual con artist in *Six Degrees of Separation*, and showed some box-office swagger with the hit movie *Bad Boys*, co-starring comedian Martin Lawrence.

But it wasn't until the blockbusters *Independence Day* and *Men in Black* that people finally began connecting Will Smith with superstardom—and box-office gold.

It's not surprising why Smith has vaulted to the top—he's the guy everyone wants as a friend. Tall (1.87 meters) and attractive, Smith, who recently celebrated his 30th birthday, has an endearing personality and a great comic instinct. Those qualities, plus a killer smile, have endeared him to movie audiences worldwide in mostly supporting or sidekick performances.

Now, even though his latest film stars Academy Award-winning actors Gene Hackman and Jon Wright, it is Smith who's the top draw.

Smith marvels at his current standing among Hollywood's elite. "For six months I knew I was going to be working with Gene Hackman and like the third day of shooting and I'm already on screen with Gene Hackman," he said. "So, we did our first take, and he leans over to me and says [Smith does his best Hackman impression]. 'That was a great job there, son.'"

"And that kind of inspired me, and I was like, 'OK, we've gotten over that hump.'" *Enemy of the State*, featuring Smith as a successful lawyer who unwittingly becomes a target of rogue agents



Will Smith (left) and Tommy Lee Jones take on aliens in 'Men in Black.'

who believe he has evidence that implicates them in a murder. It features conspiracy theories, high-tech spying, car chases galore and the inevitable movie explosion.

It is produced by Jerry Bruckheimer, whose movie credits read like one long car chase and/or explosion: *The Rock*, *Beverly Hills Cop* and *Top Gun*, the latter of which starred Tom Cruise. Actually, Cruise was the first choice for Smith's role, but he was busy shooting Stanley Kubrick's *Eyes Wide Shut*, which has been shooting for the past year-and-a-half.

"I don't have any problems taking Tom Cruise's seconds," Smith says with a laugh. "I will eat off of Tom Cruise's cinematic plate any day of the week."

An even greater sign of Smith's mainstream success may be his future role in Barry Sonnenfeld's movie version of the *The Wild Wild West*, in which Smith was cast as James West. Back in old TV series, West was a white man played by Robert Conrad.

Even Smith was surprised when Sonnenfeld, who produced *Men in Black*, called on Smith for the film.

"I'm saying to him, 'Barry, I'm black' and he's like, 'No one cares that you're black, no one cares.'"

"And in a way I think he's correct about that," he said. "It's a weird dichotomy because no one cares and everyone cares at the same time."

Not only does Smith have a potential blockbuster in movie theaters, he recently signed a deal with Universal Pictures to start his own production company, Overbrook Entertainment. At the same time, he is eyeing film projects with Whitney Houston and a possible biopic on Muhammad Ali.

SMITH also hasn't forgotten his music career. He has a hit album on the chart, *Big Willie Style*. It is his first album in years and a best-seller.

He also won a Grammy this year for best rap solo performance for the single, "Men in Black." At first Smith was unsure if he should return to the rap arena. A little nudge by someone close to him, however, changed his mind.

"I was really nervous about the big change that hip-hop had undertaken, when that whole

gangsta rap thing took over the mainstream of hip-hop. It was just dark, and the darkness was putting out my light a little bit," he said.

"Jada kind of convinced me to go ahead and make the records that I wanted to make and make people have to deal with me rather than me have to deal with them."

Jada is fellow actor and wife, Jada Pinkett Smith, who in July gave birth to a baby boy, Jaden. He is Pinkett Smith's first child and Smith's second—he has another son, Willard "Trey" Smith, from his marriage to Sheree Smith, which dissolved after three years.

A smile comes to his face when he mentions Jada's name—which is frequently. He calls her his best friend, and said the two had a "spiritual marriage" long before their New Year's Eve wedding date.

"It just felt right. It didn't feel like this was something that was this big huge life decision. I felt like I was going to be with her for the rest of my life anyway," he said. "We weren't even going to have a wedding, we were going to basically get married in a quick

ceremony. But our family was like, 'Hold on! Jada's mother wasn't having it.'"

When seeing the couple in public, they seem to be totally in love and in sync. But Smith said they both realize the pitfalls that can doom a relationship, and they know it will take a lot of work to keep it strong.

"Nothing you love was easy to attain, and we're very clear and very realistic about our situation," he said. "We have a very realistic outlook on the world. It makes it so much easier when you deal with what's real, rather than dealing with what you wish was real. It's so much easier when you're with someone who is willing to accept reality rather than create this fantasy."

Of course, a little humor doesn't hurt either. "Jada said to me the other day, 'You are one of the biggest movie stars in the world. You just sold 8 million albums with your record. You are at the peak of your career and you got married.'"

"I said 'Yeah?' "Jada's reply: "That was just stupid." Then Smith laughs, flashing that killer smile. (AP)

House and atmosphere rev up Plastic

By SOME LEMON

'Shiny happy people holding hands,' as the REM song goes, would be the best way to describe Plastic, a spanking-new nightclub in Tel Aviv's Florentine neighborhood.

Florentine was once a near-shm. But the area, sparked by a municipal-sponsored rehabilitation program, has been undergoing a process of gentrification. Despite the face-lift, housing prices remain relatively low, attracting trendies, young families, and arty types who are high on creativity, but low on cash.

The SoHo atmosphere is more marked after midnight, when all the stores and small factories have closed and the artists, dancers and actors come out to play. Plastic presents just the sort of expensive grunge that tends to attract this type of crowd. Celebrities that want to leave behind their TV and film sets, recording studios and radio shows, will find funky fun in this warehouse-type club, which boasts several strobe lights called "robots" that cost NIS 25,000 each, and illuminated aquarium-like tanks built into the simple concrete supports. (Don't fret, animal lovers. The tanks don't contain fish, only water!)

PLASTIC boasts two bars, one at the club's entrance and another at the opposite end of the dance area.

To the right of the entrance is a staircase, reminiscent of your local garage, that leads up to a chill-out area, with red velvet sofas and an atmosphere of intimacy for all those who like to see and prefer not to be seen.

Along the back wall is a two-level stage on which patrons put on an amateur version of MTV's *The Grid*. Scantily clad party-people and the pulsating House music rev up the already hyped atmosphere.

On a huge structure that slightly resembles Babylon Five, a very expensive DJ creates a mood that gets more intense as the night goes on: the house dancers, wearing little more than G-strings and make-up, are an item on stage, and even more so when they descend to dance with the very enthusiastic crowd.

After seeing all too many pseudo-pool nightclubs on the Tel Aviv party circuit, Plastic, with its understated decoration, struck me as a fresh alternative. It has the sort of Nirvana-type feel that has become an integral part of the pop-youth culture all over the world. It is certainly a must for fun-lovers looking for something new.

PLASTIC is open on Friday nights from 11:30 p.m. until 8 a.m., during the next few weeks the nightclub will begin opening on Thursdays and Saturdays. The cover charge is NIS 60; at this point there are no student discounts, but in the future—who knows? Entrance from age 23.

Plastic, 12 Rehov Hashach,
Florentine, Tel Aviv

Books on my mind

Trade and Industry Minister Natan Sharansky remembers the books that sustained him in prison and still do today.

After an unremitting international campaign to free him, Prisoner of Zion Anatoly Sharansky immigrated in 1986, and promptly changed his first name to Natan. In 1988, he published his autobiography, *Fear No Evil*, which, among the rest, speaks of his life under the Soviets. During his nine years in a Soviet prison, the now Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky couldn't write anything, lest the KGB destroy it. In his head, though, he wrote, witnessed, prayed and played endless games of chess against himself. (He's good enough to have beaten Gary Kasparov last year, even though Kasparov was playing 99 other people at the same time.)

He was able to read, however, and discussed those volumes that got him through the hard times.

1. *The Psalms*
"It's my all-time favorite book," he says.

He describes the confiscation of his only copy, given to him by his wife, Avital, in the book. It had been smuggled to him by a tourist in a letter. "It had disappeared with my other belongings after a search by the KGB. At the end of the investigation period it was 'returned' to me, but because prisoners were forbidden to have reading matter that was printed abroad, the book was kept in the prison's store-room."

2. *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov.

"It's the dark humor that helps the prisoner become an actor, producer, audience. There's participation."

Everybody thinks you're crazy, but it's very real in your own reality, time and soul.

"It gave me strength as I re-read it in the gulag. [In the gulag], all things have new meanings."

3. *The Idiot* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky
"[It touches me] the way fate



took him close to death by the czar's firing squads, but Dostoyevsky was saved. He plays on so many different levels. He is close to death and sees things deeply."

4. *Will The USSR Live Until 1984?* by Andre Amarek (1969).

"He spent so many years in prison for defying convention, the establishment. I think it was an obvious allusion to Orwell's 1984."

"I knew [Amarek]. So in 1985, the KGB came and laughed that your friend the prophet is wrong! He died for this underground, important document. And everything he said came true..."

5. *Don Quixote* by Miguel Cervantes.

"Again, the humor and the ability to build a world in one's own brain. Like Stephen Zweig's short stories and chess novels. His games were always played against world champions. And, yes, Victor Korchnoi, persona non grata, was also a dissident."

Sharansky could have gone on and on, but we compromised. For the record, his list also includes *Abraham, Abrahim*, by William Faulkner, and a sentimental choice: *Exodus*, by Leon Uris.

—Adam Schonbrun

Hot tip

By DAHLIA SCHENDLIN

Tel Aviv

New Year's Eve in Israel simply won't ever be what it was in the old country. But the truth is, who really likes New Year's Eve? Party-chasing only goes so far, and living down a possible hang-over the next morning is never pleasant.

I'll take the Tel Aviv version any day, as tonight's choices of events range from good to better: they go from mellow jazz to slick dance, good theater, and for those who simply must do it, there is even a rousing party or two.

The dance scene is practically a competition for the wildest show: Inba Pinto performs *Wrapped* at

Suzanne Dellal tonight, a work which has won deserved acclaim worldwide. The duet scene, in particular, is a rollicking display of Pinto's clever, coordinated humor. Starts at 9 p.m. Call (03) 510-5656.

No matter how many times they do it, Batsheva's *Anaphase* never loses its energy and charm. This is easily one of the funnier dance performances ever created and it's performed with formidable technical skill. The combination makes *Anaphase* a festive treat for this evening, where it plays at the Cinemara at 9. The show also continues through the weekend, starting at 10 tomorrow night and 9 p.m. again on Saturday. Call (03) 527-9797.

Tel Aviv's jazz scene celebrates the new year in its standard haunts: Hakosif Pub, in Rabin Square, ever-dependable, hosts the lovable Beni Tal Quintet, starting at 10:30 tonight. Call (03) 522-3244. The Camelot club celebrates with a special show by the Walter Blanding Jazz Quartet. It begins just in time for countdown, at 11:30 p.m. 16 Shalom Aleichem. (03) 528-5222.

Otherwise, usher in the moment at Logos, deep in the heart of the Carmel Market, where Eran Tzur will be performing *Stolen*

Waters. His shows begin at 10 p.m. and midnight. (03) 510-0913.

Theater doings start in Old Jaffa, where the Gesh Theater presents pre-premiere showings of its latest new production, *Eating*, by Ya'acov Shabtai, which promises to be an exemplary Yevgeny Arye extravaganza. It stars Amnon Wolf and the endearing Yevgenya Dodina. Starts at 9 p.m. at Gesh Theater. Call (03) 560-0783.

The more serious can see *Sonya Mushkat* at Habimah, Savyon Liebrecht's play about two sisters during the Holocaust. Starting at 5 and 8:30 p.m. (03) 526-6666.

Lighten up afterwards at Tzavta, where Naor Tzion performs stand-up comedy, starting at 10:30 this evening and with a second performance at 00:45. (03) 695-0156.

Finally, where exactly can one celebrate New Year the old fashioned way? The parties do exist, and they actually offer exciting potential.

Enav Center hosts a "gala evening" style soiree: starting off at 9 p.m., a live jazz band will perform in the lobby. This will be followed by wine, champagne and a full buffet, and the Ronnie Peterson Blues Band. Ultimately the scene transforms itself into a

big bash, with a DJ until the wee hours and beyond. This Camelot production costs, so bring cash: NIS 200 per person. Call (03) 685-2590 for details.

Planet Hollywood is hosting a different kind of party. This one offers belly dancing, Dixie and other kinds of dancing, comedians, jazz and a special menu. The event also gets an early start, at 9 p.m. Call (03) 517-7827 for reservations, which are definitely needed.

And when all the action is over, Saturday night is the time for a lovely musical wind-down: for those who missed this show at the Zionist Confederation House in Jerusalem last week, the Three Divas evening comes to the Tel Aviv Museum. The music of Om Kalthom, Fairuz, and Lila Murad will be performed, with Tayseer Elias moderating and playing the oud. Starts at 8:30 p.m. Call (03) 695-7361 for details.

Jerusalem

The groovy way to spend New Year's Eve is with Kibbutz Tzora's Folk Club New Year's Hootenanny, at Givat Shmush (near the kibbutz). With a name like that, who can resist? Starts at 9 p.m., call (02) 990-8382.

English theater plays tonight, with Neil Simon's *Jake's Women* showing at the Hadassah Center Stage Theater. At Merkaz Hamagshimim, 7a Dor Dor Vedorshav, in the German Colony. At 8 p.m. (02) 561-9165.

New Year's day is the time to hear Jerusalem's own jazz, at the Pargod Theater's Friday afternoon jam session. Starts at 1:30. Stick around there on Saturday night, too, for an evening of Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill, entitled *Why Should They Remember My Name*. Produced with the department of theater history at Hebrew University, the event features selections of Brecht's work, accompanied by the music of Weill. Starts at 9:30 at Pargod, 94 Bezalel Street. Call (02) 623-2646.

And Points Beyond

Outside Tel Aviv, Kibbutz Ga'ash holds a New Year's Eve Carnival, at which Coco Loco's Latino beat will be the main attraction. Call (09) 954-7444 for details.

On Saturday night in Ness Ziona, the Karmon Dance Company dances in the second day of the New Year, at the Heichal Hatarbut, starting at 8:30 p.m. Call (08) 940-1881.

Weekender Food & Drink



Soups, glorious soups

By CAROLE SUGARMAN

Barbara Kafka, the brassy and innovative New York food writer and cookbook author, has just written a new book for anyone who loves the comfort of a hot bowl of soup and wants to expand their nurturing repertoire.

In the first chapter of *Soup: A Way of Life* we learn all about the likes, dislikes and quirks of the Kafka clan, including Grandma Dora Shapiro, a wretched cook who apparently started the soup tradition. Then the book moves on to soups based on vegetables, chicken, meat, fish and legumes. It ends with chapters on stocks and little things to put in them - wontons, meatballs, kreplach and the like.

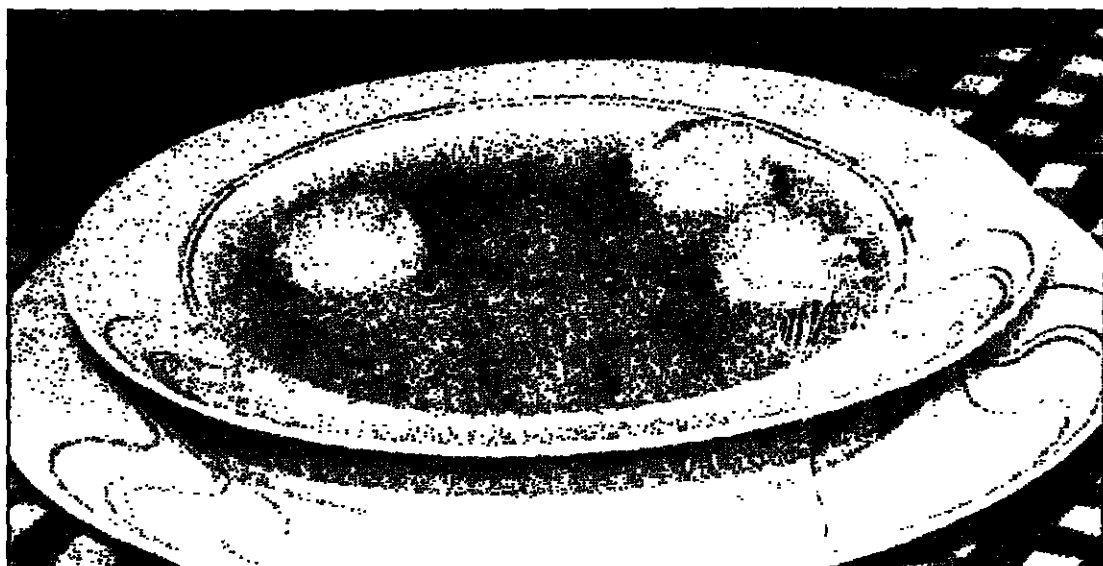
The 300 recipes in the book cover a wide range, from the very fast (simple white bean and pesto soup that takes about 10 minutes) to the very lengthy (extra-rich chicken stock that simmers for 12 hours), and from the common (beef barley, lentil) to the unusual (garburesque of goose, pink bean and radicchio).

Regardless of their ease or complexity, most of the recipes we tested did need some tinkering (adding more liquid, less or more seasonings, etc.), as Kafka readily warns at the beginning of the book. Still, with minor adjustments, these are recipes you'll make again.

CREAMY CARROT SOUP

Be careful not to overheat when cooking the cumin or it will burn. From the "Vegetable Soups" chapter.

2 tsp. canola oil
1 1/2 tsp. ground cumin
3 medium carrots, peeled and cut into 2.5cm. lengths



2 1/4 cups chicken or vegetable broth
1 cup ricotta cheese
1 tsp. kosher salt or to taste
1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice

In a medium-sized saucepan, cook the oil and cumin over low heat, stirring, for 1 minute. Stir in the carrots and stock.

Bring to a boil. Lower the heat and simmer for 30 minutes, or until the carrots are very soft, adding a bit of water if necessary. In a blender, puree the ricotta with a small amount of the cooking liquid.

With a slotted spoon, remove the carrots from the pan and add to the ricotta.

Blend until smooth. Whisk the puree into the liquid in the pan. Heat through and season with the salt and lemon juice. (Serves 4 as a first course.)

SIMPLE WHITE BEAN AND PESTO SOUP

I am not always the purest of the

pure; often I just want a good result in a hurry. This is a terrific soup for such an occasion, with all sorts of optional shortcuts.

From the "Oats, Peas, Beans, and Barley Grow..." chapter.
2 cups chicken broth
4 cups cooked small white beans or 2 500-600 gr. cans small white beans, drained and rinsed
2 Tbsp. pesto sauce (recipe follows) or commercial pesto
freshly ground black pepper to taste

In a medium-sized saucepan, bring the chicken broth and beans to a boil.

Lower the heat. Stir in the pesto and pepper to taste. Simmer for 1 minute. (Serves 4 as a first course.)

PESTO SAUCE

Pesto is Italian, pistou is French. Either can be made with or without pine nuts and cheese. It depends on the dish, tradition and personal preference. For soup, it is

usually made without nuts or cheese. From the "From Stock to Soup" chapter.

2 Tbsp. pine nuts (optional)
2 large bunches basil, leaves only, washed well and dried
2 medium cloves garlic, peeled
1/2 cup olive oil
3 Tbsp. freshly grated Parmesan cheese (optional)

In a small skillet, toast the pine nuts, if using, over medium-low heat for about 4 minutes, tossing frequently, until they are evenly, lightly browned.

Immediately remove them from the pan and cool completely. In a food processor, finely chop the basil and garlic. With the machine running, pour the olive oil through the feed tube in a slow steady stream.

Add the cheese and pine nuts, if using. Process until fairly smooth in texture. (Makes 1/2 cup.) (The Washington Post)



By PHYLLIS GLAZER

Phyllis' Tips

home dealers.

Two Good (OK)

Elite's new Two Good candy bar, made of chocolate with a whipped nut filling, reminds kids of a wafer cookie and they love it. It's not health food, but there's a lot worse stuff you can buy your kids.

At least it doesn't contain food coloring or preservatives. NIS 3.80.

Yerba Mate (excellent)

When I first arrived in Israel 20 years ago, I had a friend whose family drank mate tea out of a little brass pot in almost a ritualized form; the family would sit together and pass the pot from one to the other and each would take a little sip of the bitter drink. Some members of the family would even hold a sugar cube in their mouths and sip the liquid through the sugar.

They seemed to love it so much that I thought that mate tea must have some magical power, or must be very rich in caffeine in order to give them the lift they seemed to get as a result of drinking it. I filed the thought away in my memory and never came in contact with the tea until just recently, when a package of Yerba Mate was delivered to my door. It turns out I was wrong about a lot of things.

Firstly, mate is a tea made of a plant that grows in the rain forests of South America, where it has been utilized by the Indians for thousands of years. Although it doesn't contain caffeine, it does have 196 different minerals, which is

probably what accounts for the energy lift that imbibers enjoy.

In Israel, not only Argentines drink it - it is also popular among the Druse, who believe it helps male potency and brings luck. Although the traditional way to drink it is by making a strong brew, I like to make it as I would green tea - light in color and delicately flavored. Although I drink it without sweetener, it can be sweetened with sugar or honey. At NIS 6.90 for 500 gr. it's a real steal.

Edible bow ties

Rahel Talmon sent this recipe (and a sample of it) to my door. The pastries she sent me were in the shape of circles and bow ties, though Talmon claims that any shape goes. This is actually her grandmother's recipe from Poland, where it is called hus-tim.

HUSTIM

3 cups flour
2 eggs
1/2 tsp. baking soda
3 Tbsp. cognac or liqueur
3 Tbsp. boiling water
pinch salt

Place all the ingredients in a bowl and mix to form a dough. Divide into 4-6 pieces and roll each into a thin sheet. Use a sharp knife to cut out different shapes and deep fry them in oil.

Remove with a slotted spoon and put a bit of jam on each one. Sprinkle with powdered sugar and serve immediately. (Serves at least 6.)



By PHYLLIS GLAZER

In the US I used to bake brownies which were rich, heavy, dark brown and full of flavor. Here in Israel I've tried without success to duplicate them. The result is an airy, tan-colored and tasteless brownie, especially when compared to what I know and love. From my analysis, the local ingredients are at fault, but I'm not sure which one(s). Can you help/comment on the differences in unsweetened chocolate, butter, sugar, salt, vanilla, eggs, flour, walnuts and pecans?

- Jeffrey Hyson, Hadera

Most of the ingredients here are different than they are in the US, but the major difference, I think, is in the flour. The white flour sold here is like the American cake flour - it is finer than all-purpose flour and you will need slightly more to compare to an American recipe calling for regular flour. There is no unsweetened choco-

late here - only bittersweet, so you can slightly reduce the amount of sugar you add. Make sure to use good-quality chocolate or an imported cocoa.

One cup of butter in an American recipe is technically about 225 gr. of butter. For convenience sake you can round it off to 200 gr., but those 25 gr. could make a difference in the brownie's taste and texture.

Most American recipes use large eggs unless otherwise stated; most Israeli eggs are smaller. If the eggs you are using aren't large, you might want to add an extra egg.

Use real vanilla extract, like that made by McCormick, rather than the local vanillin extract. The walnuts and pecans should be the same. Most of them come from the US anyway.

Just before Rosh Hashana *The Jerusalem Post* printed two pages of halva recipes. I inadvertently threw out the paper and would be grateful if I could get a copy of those two pages. I would, of course, be willing to pay for them.

- Frances Rothschild, Safed

Back copies of articles can be ordered through the Jerusalem Post Information Service, for a fee. The telephone number is (02) 531-5620.

Could you tell me where I can buy Le Creuset pots and pots made of red copper on the outside with a chrome layer on the inside?

- Channa Hatzman, Nesher

I have seen Le Creuset pots at Tollman's in the Herzliya industrial area. You might find the copper pots you're looking for either there or at La Cornue Kitchens, which imports copper pots and is located in Tel Aviv (tel. (03) 527-6811).

Could you let me know where you can get evaporated milk in Israel or what product can be used instead?

- Erika Meyer, Kiryat Tivon

I've come across evaporated milk both in my local grocery store and in the Carmel Market, but I haven't seen it in my local supermarket.

Phyllis Glazer can be contacted c/o The Jerusalem Post Magazine, P.O. Box 81, Jerusalem, 91000, or by e-mail: phyllisfood@jpost.co.il.

Do not send stamped, self-addressed envelopes, as inquiries cannot be answered individually. Feedback also appears in *The Jerusalem Post Magazine* on Friday.

Quick weeknight chicken

Conjuring up creative weeknight meals has just become less of a chore thanks to Michele Urvater's *Monday to Friday Chicken*, a book that's perfect for chefs short on inspiration, time and exotic ingredients. We were especially grateful for the recipe variations aimed at children and the creative leftover tips.

This recipe below provides a welcome reprieve from those ubiquitous chicken breasts.

MELTINGLY MARVELOUS CHICKEN

2 Tbsp. butter or margarine
8 skinless chicken thighs (about 1 1/2 kg.)
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/2 cup Dijon-style mustard
1/2 cup lemon juice
2 Tbsp. brown sugar
salt and cayenne pepper to taste
1/2 cup fresh parsley leaves, packed

Preheat the oven to 180°.

Melt the butter or margarine in a 4-liter flameproof enameled cast-iron saucepan over medium heat. Add the thighs and sauté until the meat stiffens slightly, about 2 minutes per side. Remove chicken to a plate.

Add the garlic, mustard, lemon juice and brown sugar to the saucepan.

Season with salt and cayenne pepper. Return the chicken to the pan and turn the thighs in the sauce to coat all sides.

Bring the mixture to a simmer over medium heat, cover and transfer the pan to the oven. Bake



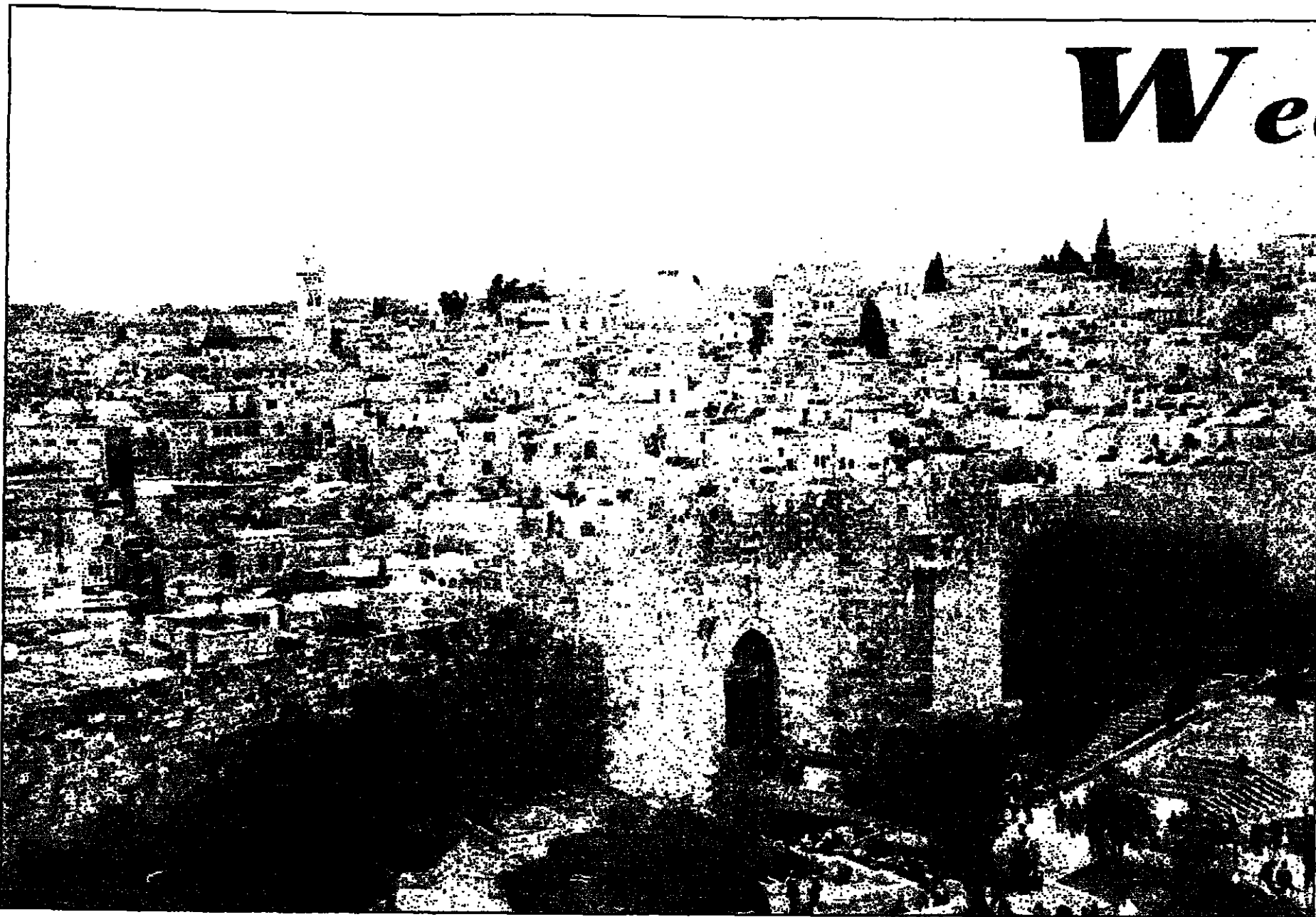
until the chicken is cooked through, about 45 minutes. Meanwhile, finely chop the parsley.

Place the thighs on a plate and keep warm. Discard the surface fat from the juices in the pan, and

bring the juices to a boil over high heat and reduce until only 1/2 cup remains. Adjust the seasoning and remove the pan from the heat. Add the parsley and spoon the sauce over the chicken. (Serves 4.) (The Washington Post)

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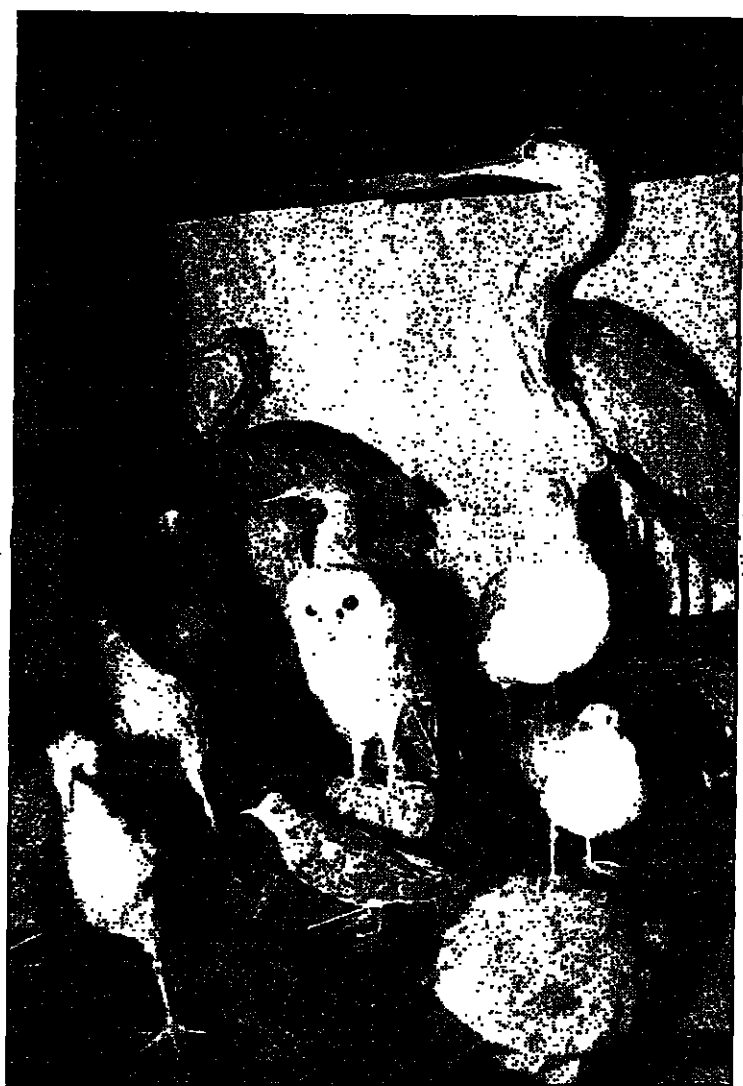
Weekender Travel



A panoramic view of Damascus Gate from Schmidt College.
(Photo by Debbie Hill)

Architecture and stuffed animals at one go

Day Tripper By Haim Shapiro



(Above) The collection was ignored until it was recently discovered by SPNI guides; (right) the main building of Schmidt College: Peace and tranquility amid the cacophony of Nablus Road.

It was quite by accident that the guides from the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel discovered the country's most complete collection of local zoology, tucked away in the corner of the basement of a girls' school in east Jerusalem.

Nablus Road is not one of Jerusalem's most impressive thoroughfares. When we visited the area with the SPNI recently, its narrow lanes were choked with cars, buses and taxis, all almost frozen in slow-moving traffic. At times it seemed as if every driver in the street was leaning on his horn.

However, once we entered the massive gates of Schmidt College, the traffic was shut out and replaced with an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity. The impressive main structure on the right was built at the turn of the century by German Catholics as a center for pilgrims, and though other buildings were added later, it is still the most imposing part of the complex.

Inside we found the high ceilings, long corridors and thick walls characteristic of the insti-

tutional buildings of that period. But before exploring the building itself, we made our way down to the dusty cellar, past long-discarded chairs and other school equipment.

The zoology exhibit, when we saw it, was not impressive. It consisted of several glass cases of stuffed animals. Some appeared rather moth-eaten, and the stuffing was coming out of others. However, it is the only such collection which has survived intact from that time. Some of the animals, such as the large crocodile from Nahal Tanninim, may have been the last surviving member of a particular species.

There is a leopard from the Judean Desert, as well as an ocelot from the desert east of the Jordan. There is a fresh-water monk seal from the Jordan River and a number of vultures no longer seen in our skies. According to the SPNI, the collection was virtually forgotten until guides discovered it during a recent tour of the building.

What they had actually come to see was the exhibit across the hallway - a collection of models of Jerusalem buildings constructed by Conrad Schick, the architect responsible for many of the buildings erected in Jerusalem at the turn of the century. Among the most interesting of Schick's models is one of the Temple Mount enclave with both the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aksa Mosque.

Another model is that of the Second Temple, based, apparently, on Schick's reading of the

Bible, together with his knowledge of the topography of the area. Although scholars today have a different idea of how the Temple must have looked, the model still bears a remarkable similarity to the one found on the grounds of Jerusalem's Holyland Hotel.

Upstairs, on the top floor, the atmosphere is far more cheerful no doubt a result of the light streaming in from the main windows. On this floor, one can visit the room in which Kaiser Wilhelm II was received when he visited Jerusalem. The room is still furnished in the Levantine "Oriental" style which was popular among Europeans coming to the Middle East at that time.

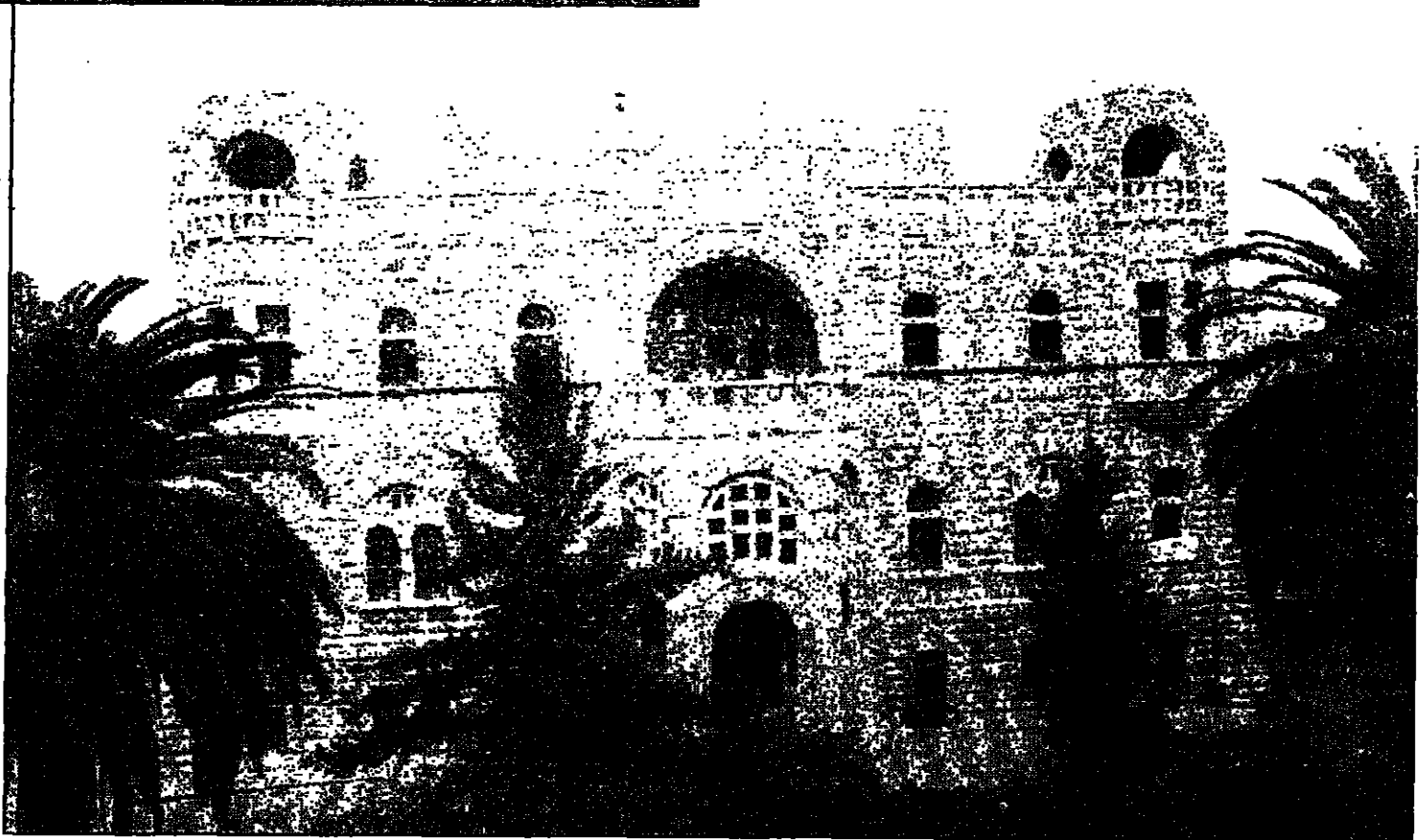
It is yet one more flight of stairs up to the roof for a dazzling view of the Old City of Jerusalem, as seen from the north. The view over the nearby Damascus Gate and the Christian Quarter, dominated by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, is especially good.

Schmidt's College is a stop on one of the regular tours offered by the SPNI in Jerusalem. The organization also has a wide range of tours and vacation packages in Israel.

For information about tours in Jerusalem, tel. (02) 624-4605.

For information about tours and vacations packages throughout the country, including Jerusalem, tel. (03) 638-8688.

If you wish to visit Schmidt College on your own, you must coordinate your visit in advance tel. (02) 628-3280 or 628-8198.



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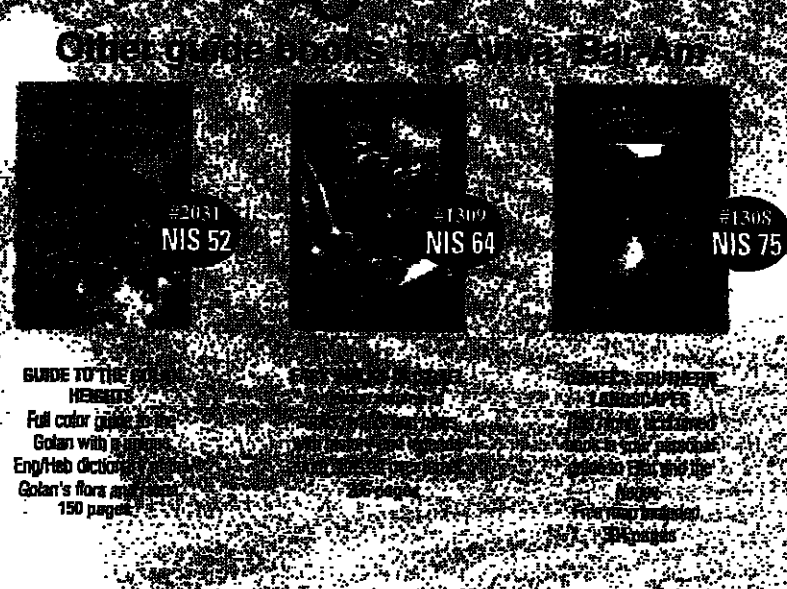
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Beyond the Walls: Churches of Jerusalem takes you into the heart and soul of 30 Jerusalem churches to reveal hidden secrets. Entertaining folk tales, inspiring legends, and exciting historical narratives keep you riveted. In this book you gain a deeper insight into what goes on behind the walls today, and what happened there in the past.

Beyond the Walls: Churches of Jerusalem was written by renowned travel writer Aviva Bar-Am, a former columnist at The Jerusalem Post. Lavishly illustrated with 60 color photographs.



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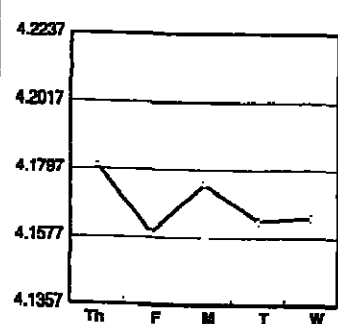
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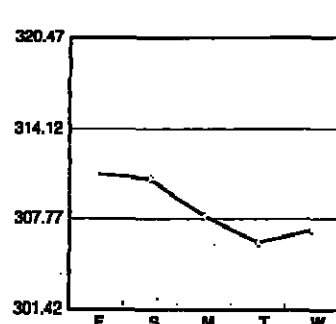
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in brief

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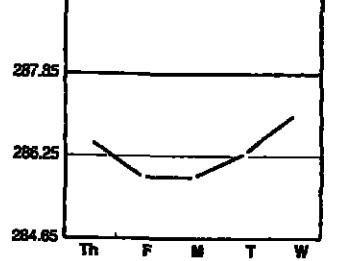


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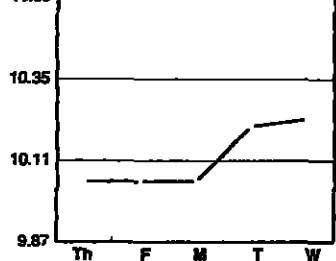
GOLD

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OIL

\$ per barrel of Brent crude



Indigo cuts 10% of workforce

Indigo yesterday announced that a reorganization plan implemented in the fourth quarter led to a 10 percent decline in its workforce at an estimated cost of \$2.5m. The developer of digital printing technology added that the layoffs would lead to quarterly savings in general and administrative expenses of some \$3m. As part of the plan Rafi Maor, president of Indigo Israel, would be appointed president and chief operating officer while George Carlisle, president of Indigo America, and Shlomo Nimrod, the company's CFO, will leave the company.

Dan Gerstenfeld

Central Bureau of Statistics:

'98 growth 1.9%, lowest in '90s; unemployment up 1% to 8.7%

By JESSICA STEINBERG

The economy grew 1.9 percent in 1998, down from 2.4% in 1997, while unemployment hit 8.7%, or 198,000 people, up from last year's 7.7%, or 172,000, the Central Bureau of Statistics said yesterday.

This is the lowest figure for economic growth this decade. Meanwhile, a purchasing-power comparison conducted by the CBS among Israel, the US, and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's 28 developed economies showed that cars sell here for nearly twice their price in the US and some

65% more than elsewhere in the OECD, while health care is about 25% cheaper than in the US and 15% elsewhere in the OECD.

Gross domestic product (GDP) — including all business services, industrial production, and construction activity — reached NIS 370 billion in 1998, up from NIS 340b. in 1997.

In per capita terms, GDP fell 0.4% to NIS 62,000, compared with an 0.1% decrease in 1997, the bureau said.

At the same time, volatility in the housing and construction sectors contributed heavily to the continued slowdown, with that sector shrinking 4.4%.

"It's fair to say the economy has stabilized in the last few months," said Ezra Hadar, deputy director at the bureau. The earlier trend of declining exports and rising unemployment has been stemmed, he said, and the jobs rate, while clearly high, is nevertheless lower than many assumed it was.

Economist Jonathan Katz, head of the macroeconomic department at Capital Assets Management, agreed. One could "very cautiously" say there's been a slight upturn in economic activity over the last month or two, though it's too early to call it a trend, he said.

The year's figures are slightly

better than expected, but it's not a dramatic change, Katz said, pointing at slowing immigration as a factor that causes many sectors to contract. At the same time, minimum-wage increases and index-linked salary hikes overshoot start-of-the-year 10% inflation expectations, creating an impression of increased spending power, he added.

The bureau began figuring GDP data according to a new method this year, which may have slightly altered the figure, said bureau spokesman David Neumann.

Called SNA93, this method is used by the International Monetary Fund, the European

Union Commission, the UN, the World Bank and the OECD.

Among the OECD's 28 member states, unemployment averaged 7.1%, while overall per capita GDP rose 2.2% and 1.6% respectively.

In comparison, the Israeli figures slumped following the shekel's depreciation between August and October, said Soli Peleg, the bureau's chief national accounts statistician.

Once the shekel depreciated from its October high, the consumer price index increased 3% in October, with inflation rebounding to 7.2%. For all of '98, inflation is expected to total about 8.9%.

Edusoft sold for \$40m.

By DAN GERSTENFELD

Degem Systems announced yesterday that its subsidiary Edusoft would be sold to a foreign company for \$40.2 million.

The company refused to disclose the purchaser's identity or provide further information.

Under the agreement the foreign company will acquire all the outstanding securities of Edusoft for \$8.50 per share, which is some 30 percent above Tuesday's closing price of Edusoft shares on Nasdaq. In early US trading yesterday the price of the company's share rose to \$8.12.

Edusoft, a producer of multimedia English-learning products, said that after deduction of investment banking fees, shareholders are expected to receive \$8.33 per share.

Degem, which holds 60% of Rosh Ha'ayin based Edusoft, said it expects to write a capital gain before tax of NIS 10.3m.



Good morning, minister

Workers from the Phoenicia Glass Works in Yeroham present their case to Industry and Trade Minister Natan Sharansky outside his home in Jerusalem yesterday at dawn. Phoenicia workers and owners argue that their factories are facing closure due to accelerated imports, which they claim are being dumped locally at below-market prices.

Court overturns PM's income tax appointment

By DAVID ZEV HARRIS

Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's attempt to pass a mini-tax reform before the general election was dealt a blow yesterday, when the High Court of Justice decided he cannot extend Income Tax Commissioner Doron Levy's term in office.

Levy was to have stepped down at the end of December, to be replaced temporarily by one of his deputies, Yonatan Kaplan. However, immediately upon taking over as acting finance minister, Netanyahu announced he was extending Levy's tenure by a month to the end of January.

Kaplan's appointment was made by former minister Yaakov Neeman, who said it would initially be for three months from January 1, indicating to Kaplan that he would ask the cabinet to make his post permanent during January, according to ministry officials. Just days later Neeman resigned, believing his long-planned tax reform would be abandoned, especially given the then strong possibility of early elections.

Netanyahu, upon taking up the reins, issued a news release announcing that Levy had agreed to remain in his post until the end

of January and would work toward implementing the reform.

Claiming that Kaplan had been dealt with unfairly, the Movement for Quality Government petitioned the High Court, which yesterday ruled Netanyahu's appointment could not stand. Attorney-General Elyakim Rubinstein joined forces with the movement in opposition to the appointment.

During the appeal, the movement also suggested there may be new evidence against Levy from an earlier investigation into his activities. The movement, however, dropped this element of the petition, particularly after Rubinstein said Levy had already been cleared of all charges.

In a statement, Netanyahu told the court he had asked Levy to stay in place to maintain a semblance of order after Neeman's departure and to implement a scaled-down tax reform.

Levy is expected to make a statement today during a hastily organized farewell party at the Income Tax Commission, while Kaplan will replace him from January 1. Netanyahu has agreed to meet Kaplan, an accountant, to discuss the possibility of making the appointment permanent.

The court will reconvene to hear an update on January 13.

Due to new regulations

100 TASE companies face delisting

By DAN GERSTENFELD

Some 100 companies may be delisted from the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange within a year if they fail to meet newly instituted regulations, the management of the TASE yesterday said in a press conference.

According to the new maintenance rules, which were adopted last September by the Knesset Finance Committee, trading in companies which fail to meet the new criteria will be suspended starting December 1999.

The regulations require that the public hold at least \$400,000 in each company, public holdings in small companies should be above

7.5% of their equity, and the company's equity capital should exceed \$500,000.

Currently 100 of the 663 publicly traded companies fail to meet at least one of the requirements.

It should be noted, however, that the number of firms that will actually be delisted is expected to be significantly lower, as some have already published tender offers and others plan to act in order to meet the criteria.

In addition, the TASE board of directors can delay the delisting for as long as three years starting from the day the company is suspended from trading.

TASE managing director Saul

(Sam) Bronfeld said that it is hard to predict how many companies will eventually be delisted, but added that the TASE has the highest number of publicly traded companies per capita in the world.

The local bourse hopes that the Brodet Committee recommendations calling for double listing of shares — allowing trading in Tel Aviv in Israeli stocks floated in the US — will be implemented as soon as next year. "If there is anything that can give life to the TASE it is the double listing," Yair Orgler, chairman of the TASE said.

He added that the bourse has already applied for membership to the New York Depository Trust

Company (DTC) to allow fast transferring of equity between the two markets. In addition it has approached the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) asking for designation. The TASE hopes to receive approval from the SEC as early next year.

According to figures supplied by the TASE, the average daily turnover in 1998 was NIS 250 million compared with NIS 230m. in 1997. During the year companies raised NIS 7.9 billion in public offerings compared with NIS 7.4b. a year ago. However, the majority of this sum was raised as part of the privatization plan, in which the government raised some NIS 4.4b. by selling stocks

to the public, allowing it to reduce its holdings in the TASE to 9% of all stocks from 11% in 1997.

The offerings include raising NIS 1.3b. from the sale of holdings in Israel Chemicals in the largest public offering ever and the sale of government stakes in United Mizrahi Bank, Bank Leumi, Bank Hapoalim, and Bezeq.

Trading in options on the Maof 25 index rose by 30% to some 31,000 options a day. Additionally, trading in shekel-dollar options more than tripled because of the shekel's high volatility, which led to a 300% increase in trading of shekel-dollar options.

Corporate Sweden frets over exclusion

STOCKHOLM (Reuters) — Some of Sweden's top companies are worried that their competitiveness in Europe — their main export market — will be hit by the fact that Sweden has excluded itself from joining the euro, which will be officially launched tomorrow.

Vehicle maker AB Volvo said in remarks published on Tuesday it may lose hundreds of millions of crowns a year because Sweden has put off a decision on joining the single currency, at least in the near-term.

"We're talking about hundreds of millions of crowns per year," Lars Persson, responsible for euro-related issues at Volvo, told the daily Svenska Dagbladet in an interview.

"It's unfortunate. It increases business risks as the Swedish crown's value is so unstable. Volvo is vulnerable to currency changes," Persson said. Around 50 percent of Volvo's sales are inside the euro area.

Sweden's crown fell sharply on foreign exchanges in response to global turmoil in 1998, while the currencies of small European countries planning to join monetary union remained relatively stable.

Sweden has decided to opt out of the euro's launch, mainly because of negative public opinion, but the government has said it will let voters decide whether to join later through either a referendum or a general election.

But Sweden's business sector wants the country to join as soon

as possible, and several businesses are already preparing to convert their accounts to the euro.

Sweden's parliament will vote late in 1999 on a government proposal to allow Swedish companies to list their shares and draw up accounts denominated in euros from January 1, 2000.

LM Ericsson, the world's third largest mobile phone maker, told Reuters the effects of Sweden's exclusion from the single currency would be limited as it was a global company with only 22% of total sales in Europe.

"But of course we see it as a disadvantage that we're not joining at the start," Ericsson's corporate treasury director Ann Westergren said.

Sweden's Employers' Confederation (SAF) said the

EURO LAUNCH

BY PAUL DE BENDEN

main problem was that corporates would be harmed by the government's failure to show exactly how it stands on EMU membership and what its strategy will be.

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The Nature and National Parks Protection Authority

Tender for the Establishment, Preparation, Operation and Maintenance of Food Services and Souvenir Stores in the Masada National Parks

The Nature and National Parks Protection Authority (hereinafter, "The Authority") hereby invites bids for the establishment, preparation, operation and maintenance of food services and souvenir stores in the Masada National Parks.

- The Authority is interested in the operation of food services and souvenir stores during the working hours of the national park.
- The proposed contract period is five years with option for extension.
- The successful bidder shall sign a detailed agreement with the Authority. Details of the contract are specified in the agreement.
- The successful bidder shall be responsible for obtaining all licenses and permits required for the operation of the building for food services and souvenir store purposes.
- The factors to be taken into consideration in determining the successful bidder are:
 - Previous experience in the operation of food services and souvenir stores in tourism projects.
 - The amount of the license fee offered to the Authority.
- The tender documents and additional details are available, for a non-refundable fee of NIS 500, at the offices of The Nature and National Parks Protection Authority, 35 Jabotinsky St., Ramat Gan (The Twin Towers), 1st floor. Tel: 03-576-6823 (Mail Bar).
- Bids should be placed in the tenders box at the Authority's offices no later than noon on February 28, 1999.
- The Authority intends to hold a site tour for the bidders. Interested bidders wishing to visit the park and inspect the site for the subject matter of this tender are requested to coordinate the visit in advance with the project manager, Ze'ev Temkin, Tel: 03-685-0075.
- The Authority reserves the right to negotiate with each and any bidder.
- The Authority does not undertake to accept the highest or any bid.

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TASE advances led by banks

Tel Aviv

Israel's benchmark stock index rose yesterday for the first time in four days, led by banking shares, after the central bank left its key interest rate unchanged to keep a rein on inflation.

The Maof Index of the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange's 25 largest companies rose 0.37 percent to 308.90, after dropping 0.76 percent Tuesday.

Bank Leumi rose 1.2 percent to 5.89. The Bank of Israel's decision to maintain the key interest rate at 13.5 percent means credit would not tighten further, which would have choked off more of the bank's lending business. Bank Hapoalim, the country's biggest bank, rose 1.2 percent to 7.59.

Israel Chemicals rose as much as 1.46 percent in heavy trading before closing at 4.11 shekels. The fertilizer maker's controlling shareholder, Israel Corp., is trying to change the company's charter to prevent Potash Corp. of Saskatchewan Inc. from gaining a seat on the board of directors. PCS, the world's largest potash miner, bought a 9 percent stake in the company for \$91.3 million. Under current rules, any shareholder with 7 percent of the company's stock may appoint a director. Israel Corp., a holding company that invests in shipping and electronics, fell 0.04 percent to NIS 1.440.

Clal Insurance Enterprise Holdings rose 1.08 percent to 37.30. Clal intends to invest in European insurance companies, according to its strategic plan for 1999, *Ma'ariv* reported. Clal Insurance is already considering

joint ventures with partners in Cyprus, Greece, and Romania, the paper said, without citing sources. Bezeq rose 20.4 percent to 12.98.

Europe

European stocks fell for the first day in four, led by Lloyds Group TSB and other banks on concern that recent gains aren't justified by their earnings outlook. The Bloomberg banking and finance index has risen 45 percent in two months.

"I just sold the last of my banks because even if there are going to be mergers in that business, I can't see them going higher," Jacques Antoine Bretteit, who manages \$700 million at International Capital Gestion in Paris.

The Bloomberg Europe 500 Index fell 1.53 points, or 0.8 percent, to 199.18 as declines outnumbered gains by seven to five. Five of the eight benchmark indexes in Europe's biggest stock markets fell and three were mixed.

Lloyds led the banking index 1.28 points lower to 180.4, the biggest industry decline in terms of index points. The UK's fourth-biggest bank by assets fell 35.5p to 842.5, paring its 50 percent gain since October 5. National Westminster Bank Plc, the UK's third-biggest bank by assets, fell 54p to 1.140, paring its 71 percent advance in the past two months.

ING Groep NV, Europe's fifth-biggest financial services company, fell 2 guilders to 115.1. It had risen 69 percent since October 5. HSBC Holdings Plc fell 13p to 1.520 on concern a proposed bid for control of Korea First Bank



Maof 308.9 ▲ 0.37%
Dow Jones 9274.64 ▲ 0.5%
FTSE 5882.6 ▼ 0.99%
Nikkei 13842.17 ▼ 0.03%

will burden it with bad loans. HSBC and a US group that includes General Electric Capital Corp. are vying for a controlling stake in the Korean commercial bank.

The Korean government said it would announce its decision on the sale tomorrow. Korea First held \$2.8 billion in bad loans at the end of the third quarter.

"The negative is that the market is very keen to see HSBC build up its dependence away from the Far Eastern market," said Simon Smith, who helps manage about 4 billion pounds (\$6.7 billion) at Capel Cure Sharp in Birmingham. "Now they're starting to beef up their Far Eastern earnings again."

Asia

Japanese stocks were mixed. Utilities slid as surging government bond yields made their dividends less attractive. Computer-related stocks gained on hopes an Internet shopping boom will boost

profits. The benchmark Nikkei 225 average fell 4.73, or 0.03 percent, to 13,842.17, bringing its losses this year to 9.28 percent. Kansai Electric Power Co. slid as the benchmark 10-year bond yield rose 13 basis points to 2.01 percent, just under the dividend yield indicated by Kansai's most recent payout.

"People bought these stocks for the dividend yields, not for capital gains," said Masakazu Kimura, a manager at Universal Securities Co.'s equities division. Now investors are looking for alternatives, including telecommunications and Internet stocks, he said.

Elsewhere, Singapore's Straits Times Index rose 1.2 percent, buoyed by gains of computer-related companies. Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index fell 1.0 percent on concern HSBC Holdings Plc's possible purchase of a Korean bank will burden it with heavy costs. Australia's All Ordinaries index rose 0.6 percent, lifted by optimism the economy will grow next year.

In Japan, the benchmark 10-year government bond yield rose more than a percentage point in only a month on concern the government will flood the market with bonds to fund economy-boosting measures. The surge drew funds from utility stocks, which carry a greater risk than government bonds, analysts said.

Kansai Electric Power, which provides electricity to Osaka and Kyoto and has a dividend yield of 2.02 percent, fell 1.9 percent to 2,475. Tohoku Electric Power Co., with a dividend yield of 2.5 percent, fell 2.2 percent to 2,000. (Bloomberg)

Wall Street

Blue-chip stocks pulled back, halting the Dow's eight-session winning streak, but smaller-company shares perked up as Wall Street remained mired in a pre-New Year's slump. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 46.34 points, 0.5%, to 9,274.64. Broader stock indexes finished mixed, with the Standard and Poor's 500 and the Nasdaq composite pulling back modestly from Tuesday's record highs.

Smaller-company shares turned high in the afternoon, hinting at the start of the "January effect" bounce often seen in that sector.

With one session to go, the Dow is up 17.3% for the year.

While strong money flows from year-end bonuses and retirement plan contributions have fueled a strong finish to 1998, analysts are concerned that company profits may not justify the market's lofty levels in 1999.

The Standard and Poor's 500 fell 9.88 to 1,231.93, and the technology-heavy Nasdaq composite index fell 14.83 to 2,166.94 as high-flying Internet stocks succumbed to profit-taking for a second session.

Advancing issues outnumbered decliners by a narrow margin on the New York Stock Exchange, with 2,151 up, 2,085 down and 905 unchanged. NYSE volume totaled 592.0 million shares as of 4 p.m., vs. 582.29 million at the same time on Tuesday. The NYSE composite index fell 2.78 to 594.27, but the Russell 2000 index of smaller companies rose 1.50 to 411.91, and the small-company dominated American Stock Exchange composite index rose 1.32 to 672.07. (AP)

Dollar falls against European currencies ahead of Euro

The dollar fell against the deutsche mark on expectations the euro will prove to be a powerful magnet for investors after its debut tomorrow.

"There's increasing talk that the euro will be a strong currency," said Fernando Medina, senior currency trader at Banco Atlantico. "That's one of the reasons we're seeing the dollar a bit lower."

In early New York trading, the dollar fell to 1.6697 marks from 1.6737 yesterday and is down 7.2 percent this year. Against the yen, the US currency fell to 114.74 yen from 115.57. For the year, it's

down 11.9% versus the yen.

The dollar was little changed against the European currency unit, with the Ecu at \$1.1735 from \$1.1734. The Ecu will convert 1-for-1 with the euro tomorrow.

Many traders expect the dollar to decline after the Ecu is introduced as investors retol their portfolios and central banks adjust their foreign currency reserves. Stock and bond trading in the 11 euro nations will be conducted in euros from Monday.

The dollar's losses were offset by a 6% gain in the Dow Jones Industrial Average in the eight



Dollar 4.164 ▲ 0.02%
Basket 4.568 ▲ 0.09%
Mark 2.4966 ▲ 0.91%
Sterling 6.9676 ▼ 0.29%

days through yesterday, which sparked demand for dollars from foreign investors.

"We see some downside to the dollar because of the good start of the euro," said Neil Ellerbeck, of Chase Global Asset Management in London. He said stock market gains could keep the dollar's decline in check and he sees the dollar trading between 1.63 and 1.68 marks between now and mid-January. He's planning to sell dollars in the new year.

The yen got support against the dollar as Japanese government bond yields surged, making yen-

denominated deposits more attractive, traders said. The yield on the 10-year Japanese government bond rose above 2% for the first time since September 1997 on concern a flood of new bonds - part of a government spending plan - will overwhelm demand.

Still, Banco Atlantico's Medina said he expects the dollar to regain the upper hand at the start of next year, principally because Japan's economy, the world's second-largest, remains in the doldrums. "I don't think the yen's going to get any stronger," Medina said. (Bloomberg)

Coffee declines due to bad weather in Latin America

Gold for immediate delivery was little changed at \$286.75 an ounce in London, as the market and the yen held yesterday's gains against the dollar. A weaker dollar makes gold cheaper to buyers using other currencies.

Platinum for immediate delivery rose as much as \$5, or 1.4 percent, to \$361 an ounce in London as a strike by miners at Anglo American Platinum Corp. disrupted output for an eight day. The world's largest platinum miner said workers rejected management's latest offer Tuesday, though its negotiators were talking with representatives of the National Union of Mineworkers again. About 5,000 of 40,000 workers are on strike, the company said.

Precious Metals

Crude oil for February delivery fell as much as 22 cents, or 1.9 percent, to \$11.50 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange after the American Petroleum Institute said last night that inventories fell more than expected last week. Inventories dropped by 2.4 million barrels to 337 million, though traders said that was partly offset by an unexpected increase in gasoline and distillate fuels. Traders are discounting continued military action in the skies over Iraq because they're unlikely to disrupt the flow of Iraqi oil. Iraq fired on UK and US planes patrolling a "no-fly" zone yesterday for the second time this week.

Gasoline for January delivery fell as much as 0.67 cent, or 1.9 percent, to 34.80 cents a gallon on the Nymex after the API reported a larger-than-expected rise in US inventories. The API said after floor trading ended that gasoline supplies rose by 1.68 million barrels to 211.4 million last week. Analysts surveyed by Bloomberg had expected a 100,000-barrel

Oil

drop to a 600,000-barrel rise. Traders are discounting the report of an outage at Exxon Corp.'s 425,000 barrel-a-day oil refinery in Baytown, Texas. The refinery was hit by fire, Platt's Global Alert reported, citing a local television station. Details about the blaze weren't available.

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COMMODITIES

Gold \$287.85 ▲ 1.65%
Crude Oil \$10.35 ▼ 0.26%
CRB 191.3 ▲ 0.36%

Others

Coffee for March delivery fell as much as 0.55 cent to \$1.1625 a pound on the New York Coffee, Sugar & Cocoa Exchange. Traders expect Central American exporters will soon start shipping crops that were delayed by as much as two months amid bad weather. Crops in Guatemala, Nicaragua and Mexico, the No. 1 supplier to the US, were harvested late after a drought slowed development. The

bulk of the crops are expected next month and will add to already plentiful supplies from Brazil and Colombia, the world's top two producers.

Copper for delivery in three months on the London Metal Exchange fell as much as \$26, or 1.7 percent, to \$1,490 a metric ton, as producers sold futures contracts to lock in a rise in the price to a four-week high.

Copper staged its biggest rally in five months yesterday after a drop in the dollar against other currencies spurred demand from fabricators and in turn triggered buying by speculators.

Still, contracting consumption in Asia and Europe has driven down copper prices to their lowest in more than 11 years, sliding to a nadir of \$1.467 a ton on December 24. (Bloomberg)

Bonds dive following Japanese debt slump

US bonds fell for the first day this week, as climbing yields in Japan combined with a weaker dollar sapped demand for long-term Treasuries.

"If you add the exchange-rate gain to the higher yield, Japanese bonds become more competitive," said Robert McGee, an economist at Tokai Bank Ltd. in New York.

The 30-year bond fell 6/32, or \$1.88 per \$1,000 bond, to 102 1/8. Its yield rose 1 basis point to 5.11 percent. Two-year notes gained, though, after a strong auction Tuesday. The yield on the

new note was 4.58%, down 11 basis points from the auction rate.

Japanese government bonds plunged for a second day, pushing the benchmark bond yield above 2% for the first time in more than a year, on concern a flood of bonds to fund economy-boosting plans will overwhelm demand at an auction next week.

The auction today is the first since the government announced greater bond sales and reduced purchases of bonds by state-controlled funds two weeks ago. The government plans to sell twice as

BONDS

US 30-year T-bill yield 5.11 ▲ 0.01

much new debt in the fiscal year starting April than the current fiscal year. It will purchase just one-seventh of bonds sold, down

from a half at present.

Meantime, the dollar fell for a third day against the yen, to 115.15 yen from 115.57 yen Tuesday in New York.

The tumble in Japanese bonds also raised concern some Japanese investors will sell Treasuries to cover losses in their domestic market.

"The threat of Japanese repatriation to offset losses at home has undermined Treasuries," said Philip Shaw, the chief economist at Investec.

Still, Shaw said he expects losses in Treasuries will be limited.

ed, because Japanese investors - the second-largest foreign owners of US bonds after UK investors - are still likely to favor the higher yields offered by Treasuries.

At yesterday's 4.68%, 10-year US notes yield about 266 basis points more than Japanese bonds of similar maturity. That gap in yield, or spread, narrowed from more than 400 basis points in early November.

Investors said Treasuries would also be supported by expectations for slow US inflation in the months ahead. (Bloomberg)

LAST	CHANGE	LAST	CHANGE
Tel Aviv 100	+0.37	Volkswagen	-1.35
Tel Aviv 200	+0.37	Source: S&P COMSTOCK (DATE 30-DEC-98)	
Tel Aviv 300	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 400	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 500	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 600	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 700	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 800	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 900	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 1000	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 1100	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 1200	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 1300	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 1400	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 1500	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 1600	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 1700	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 1800	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 1900	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 2000	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 2100	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 2200	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 2300	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 2400	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 2500	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 2600	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 2700	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 2800	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 2900	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 3000	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 3100	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 3200	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 3300	+0.37		
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Tel Aviv 4000	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 4100	+0.37		
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Tel Aviv 9700	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 9800	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 9900	+0.37		
Tel Aviv 10000	+0.37		

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ISRAEL MONEY MARKETS				
Patah (foreign currency deposit rates)				
Currency (deposit for)	3 MONTHS	6 MONTHS	12 MONTHS	
U.S. dollar (\$250,000)	4.770	4.800	5.090	
Pound sterling (£100,000)	5.470	5.540	5.820	
German mark (DM 200,000)	2.180	2.280	2.700	
Swiss franc (SF 200,000)	0.060	0.190	0.560	
Yan (10 million yen)	—	—	—	
(Rates vary higher or lower than indicated according to deposit)				
Shekel Foreign Exchange Rates* (30.12.98)				
CHECKS AND TRANSFERS	BUY	SELL	BANKNOTES	BUY SELL
Currency basket	4.5281	4.8012	—	—
U.S. dollar	4.1292	4.1958	4.05	4.26
German mark	2.4716	2.5115	2.42	2.55
Pound sterling	6.9143	7.0289	6.79	7.13
French franc	0.7388	0.7487	0.72	0.78
Japanese yen (100)	3.5828	3.8406	3.62	3.70
Dutch florin	2.1927	2.2281	2.15	2.26
Swiss franc	3.0187	3.0674	2.98	3.11
Swedish krona	0.5120	0.5203	0.50	0.53
Norwegian krona	0.5478	0.5565	0.53	0.57
Danish krone	0.6490	0.6595	0.63	0.67
Finnish mark	0.8128	0.8280	0.79	0.84
Canadian dollar	2.6600	2.7000	2.61	2.75
Australian dollar	2.5271	2.5779	2.48	2.61
S. African rand	0.7005	0.7118	0.63	0.72
Belgian franc (10)	1.1978	1.2172	1.17	1.24
Austrian schilling (10)	3.5129	3.5590	3.45	3.62
Italian lire (1000)	2.4857	2.5360	2.45	2.58
Jordanian dinar	5.7994	5.8930	5.70	6.11
Egyptian pound	4.8458	4.9238	—	—
ECU	6.1372	6.2382	6.03	6.33
Irish punt	2.9038	2.9507	2.85	3.00
Spanish peseta (100)	—	—	—	—
*These rates vary according to bank. **Bank of Israel.				
SOURCE: BANK LEUMI				

GENERAL ASSISTANCE

EMERGENCY PHARMACIES

Jerusalem: Hyper Pharm, Hypercol, 24 Kanfei Nesharim, 652-2368; Balsam, Salah el-Din, 627-2315; Shustat, Shustat Road, 581-0108; Dar Al-Azhar, Herod's Gate, 628-2058.

Tel Aviv: Superpharm Gimmel, 61-Ahimeir, Ramat Aviv Gimmel, 641-7117; Jabotinsky, 125 Ibn Gvirol, 548-2040.

Ramatana-Kfar Sava: Margalit mall, Jabotinsky, Hod Hasharon, 740-8881.

Netanya: Universe Club, 50 Hameleches, Southern Industrial Zone, 895-3507.

Haifa: Super Pharm (Lev Hamitrat), 53 Haatzmaut, 051-582021; New Pharm, 40 Hanita, 052-337013; Hanassi, 33 Hanassi, 053-3312.

Krayot area: Motzkin, 64 Moshe Goshen, Krayot Motzkin,

SPECIAL TOURS

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AIR-CONDITIONED ROOMS, near the sources of the Jordan, and the Golan Heights. Tel: 06-694 3012, Fax: 06-694 400. Tel: 06-694 1274, Fax: 06-694 825 84. Tel: 06-694 4767, Fax: 06-694 719.

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MOTEL GOLSHIE HAHERMON - Sagron Family Neve Aviv - 06-698 1531, 050-246 540. The closest place to the ski resort, with all conveniences, comfortable atmosphere and full Israeli breakfast. Special package deal during the ski season.

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ALON HOLIDAY APARTMENTS - new 5 star studios, in the very center of Jerusalem, air conditioned, kitchenette, private telephone, top design, completely refurbished. Tel: 02-625-0002, Fax: 02-625-0006. E-mail: alon@o-niv.com

LEV YERUSHALAYIM HOTEL - centrally located on King George Street, suites available one or 2 bedrooms plus living room, kitchenette, dining area, sleeps up to six very competitive rates. Glatt Kosher restaurant health club sauna & Jacuzzi. Tel: 02-586 1891 or 571-1856, Fax: 02-586-4372, e-mail: lev@yeshiva.com

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BET MAIMON - A small family-run hotel. All rooms air-conditioned with telephone & TV. Its famous Casa Barone restaurant serves home-cooked meals on the picturesque terrace. Fax: 06-639 6547, Tel: 06-629 0350, e-mail: maimon@pobox.com

Spa Resorts in Israel

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NIRVANA - All rooms overlooking the Dead Sea. Private beach, stylish and intimate health club. Spa treatments include Mud Wraps, Massages, Thalassotherapy, Beauty treatments. Tel: 07-688 4626.

Where to Eat

JERUSALEM

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DARNA - "Our home is your home." Authentic Moroccan Hospitality. KOSHER. Business lunch: salads, couscous, dessert, traditional mint tea. Only NIS 69 with this ad. Open 12:00-3:00 p.m., 6:00-midnight. 3 Horkanos St. Tel: 02-624 5406.

EUCALYPTUS - The taste of Israel from Biblical Days. Rave review! Excellent meat, fish & vegetarian dishes enhanced by a masterful use of herbs and spices. Luncheon specialties. Kosher. NEW ADDRESS: 4 Kikar Safra (City Hall Complex). Tel: 02-624 4331.

HECHAL SHLOMO - RESTAURANT/CATERERS serving you the best, freshest, most delicious food in an exclusive environment. Functions for up to 150. Brit Milahs, Bar Mitzvahs, 7 Brachos, special occasions, 58 King George St., Glatt Kosher/meat. Tel: 02-622 3312.

MARVAD HAKSAMIN ORIENTAL RESTAURANT - Mid-Eastern and Yemenite food. Kosher/meat. Open for lunch & dinner till 11:00 p.m.; Sun-Thurs., Fri. till 3:00 p.m. 16 King George St., (next to Carvel). Tel: 02-625 4470.

NORMAN'S STEAK'N BURGER - Freshest burgers, steaks, ribs, chicken, fish, salads and more, grilled to perfection. American style food and service. Kosher Jerusalem Rabbinat. 27 Emek Refaim, German Colony. Tel: 02-568 6603.

THE PIE SHOP - TEA & PIE, DON'T PASS ME BY, kosher, sweet & savory pies, dairy menu, soups, salads, toasts, specialty drinks. Open 11:00 a.m.-12 midnight. 9 Yosef Solomon (back yard). Tel: 02-624 8712.

RESTAURANT MISHKENOT SHAANANIM - Superb French cuisine for lunch & dinner, 7 days a week. Outstanding wine cellar, elegant setting - spectacular view - private room. Located in Yemin Moshe (below the Guest House). Tel: 02-625 1042.

RIENZI - Gandle light dining in an elegant decor. Fresh fish and home-made pasta. Kosher. Limeshadrin - Dairy. Business lunch from NIS 39, 10 King David St. (Opp New Hilton Hotel). Open Sat. Nites. Tel: 02-622 2312.

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★ Personal safes
★ Mini bar
★ Heated swimming pool
★ Exercise room
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Radja, Bodiroga sparkle in EuroStars

BERLIN (AP) — Dino Radja and Dejan Bodiroga hit key baskets down the stretch on Tuesday night as the East beat the West, 104-98, in the European All-Star game, the EuroStars.

It was Bodiroga, although he had several former NBA players as teammates, who settled the East win in a game played under near NBA-like rules including a 24-second clock.

The Yugoslav forward, playing for Greece's Panathinaikos, scored 15 points for the East and rattled off six straight points as the East trailed 93-91 with 3:20 left.

Like everyone else, Bodiroga was enthusiastic about the new rules European basketball's governing body, FIBA, is thinking of implementing.

"They're great, it makes the game quicker. A player has a chance to display all his abilities on court," said Bodiroga.

Radja, his teammate at Panathinaikos, led the East with 17 points and dunked twice with time running out to kill the West's last hopes.

Carlton Myers from TeamSystem Bologna was the game's Most Valuable Player after hitting for 20 points for the West and adding a little razzle-dazzle to the match.

Pedrag Danilovic, of Kinder Bologna, added 19.

For a while it appeared Myers and Danilovic, who had 16 of his points in the second half, would break the West jinx. The East has now won all three EuroStars contests.

Danilovic poured in nine points as the West went on an 18 to 10 spurt to start the second half that put them up 69-65.

Myers then took over by firing three. He also added a little show biz to a match that lacked sizzle when he found himself wide-open at

the 3-point line in the third quarter.

"Knowing I won the 3-point contest at halftime, I asked the crowd if they thought I was going to hit it or miss it," said Myers, who sank the shot to the crowd's delight.

A disappointing crowd of 7,500 in the 9,000-seat Max Schmeling Hall came hoping to see spectacular moves and often found the European players playing hard-nosed defense.

"The European mentality is to play to win every game," said FIBA spokesman Florian Wannerling. "The NBA players are willing not to play defense for a couple of quarters to put on a show."

The German crowd wanted to see dunks, exploding every time a player put on a little show of power.

But Conrad McRae of Fenerbahce Istanbul drew the biggest roar when he missed a power dunk that shook the rim.

The small crowd, after sellouts the previous two years in Tel Aviv and Istanbul, proved FIBA still has much to do in selling a European All-Star game.

FIBA also couldn't find a major German TV station to televise the game live even though the contest was played in the country.

The new rules also included playing quarters instead of halves and forcing teams to move the ball out of the backcourt in eight seconds instead of 10.

EAST (104)
Bodiroga 7-10 3-4 15, Kuzuy 5-11 13, Rivers 5-7 13, Naumovski 5-10 2-4 13, Elomeneu 0-3 0, Mito 1-6 1-3 3, Karasawa 2-6 3, Shaffer 0-0 0, Turtse 5-7 2-4 12, McRae 1-3 2-2 4, Radja 7-15 3-3 17, Stombergas 4-5-1 11. Totals: 43-90 13-18 104.

WEST (98)
Rond 2-3 4, Danilovic 7-10 4-6 18, Beard 2-2 4, Komenec 5-11 3-4 14, Naumovski 1-2 2, Myers 3-10 20, Mensingh 1-3 1-3 3, Alais 5-9 12, Hironaka 1-5 2, Rigaudeau 2-8 4, Hironaka 7-10 14, Totals: 43-90 13-18 98.

Rebounds-East (Radja 11), West (Fibonacci 10). Assists-East (Naumovski 4), West (Rigaudeau 8). A-7,500.

Stewart calls for review of laws on playing time

MELBOURNE (Reuters) — England captain Alec Stewart has called on cricket's governing body to review its laws on playing time to avoid a repeat of Tuesday's exhausting four-hour final session of the fourth Test.

England scored one of the most dramatic wins in Ashes history when they beat Australia by 12 runs.

Both Stewart and Australian captain Mark Taylor said they were unhappy at having to play for more than eight hours — the longest day in Test history.

"Commonsense should come into it," Stewart said. "I'm sure it will be looked at by the ICC (International Cricket Council), things like when the breaks are and how long sessions should be." Play began on Tuesday at 10.30 a.m. and did not

finish until 7.33 p.m. Playing time was eight hours three minutes compared to the normal six.

An extra half an hour had been added to the first and last sessions of each of the three days played after the opening day was washed out.

Tuesday's final session was extended even further when tea was taken early after England were dismissed in their second innings 28 minutes before the scheduled break.

More time was added on because of slow over rates, taking the final session through until 7.19 p.m.

By that stage Australia were just 14 runs away from victory and the umpires, in accordance with ICC rules, offered the batsmen an extra half an hour because a result was possible.

Stewart remonstrated with umpires Daryl Harper and Steve Bucknor, arguing that his tiring bowlers had already spent more than three hours in the field in the final session.

Unfortunately for Australia their decision to bat on backfired as England cleaned up their last three wickets for one run to complete a famous victory.

Taylor defended Australia's decision to continue but agreed with Stewart that the rules should be changed.

"I know the object of the rules is to get as much cricket played as possible but I think you've got to draw the line somewhere otherwise you'll end up starting at nine o'clock in the morning and finishing at nine o'clock at night," he said.

Domi moves from PSG to Newcastle

NEWCASTLE (Reuters) — Paris St Germain left-back Didier Domi completed his move to Newcastle United yesterday becoming the 23rd French player to join an English premier league club.

Domi, a French youth international who will not be 21 until next April, will cost Newcastle £4.0 million.

Domi has only made just over 50 appearances for PSG since making his debut for the side in the 1994-95 season, but has already picked up major honors with PSG winning the French Cup and the French League Cup last season.

He was also in the team beaten by Barcelona in the final of the European Cup Winners' Cup in 1997, but has been out of the side since coach Arne Jorgensen took over earlier this season.

Agent: Udinese want Schmeichel

COPENHAGEN (Reuters) — Italian Serie A club Udinese are among a number interested in signing Manchester United's Danish goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel when he leaves Old Trafford at the end of his season, his agent Ole Frederiksen said yesterday.

Frederiksen said there has also been interest shown from clubs in France, Spain and Portugal.

Schmeichel is allowed to start talking to other clubs from this weekend, but he is unlikely to return to Denmark with Brondby, the club he left in 1991 for United.

"It would be good for my son to learn another language before we return home," Schmeichel said.

SPORTS

in brief

BBC faces the music

LONDON (AP) — They wanted to watch Headley and Gough. Instead, it was Handel and Grieg. Thanks to a blunder by the BBC, thousands of cricket fans watched an introduction to classical music for children on Tuesday instead of the final few exciting overs of England's unexpected 12-run win over Australia.

While Dean Headley and Darren Gough bowled out the Australians for England's victory in Melbourne, viewers who switched on around breakfast time back in England didn't see a ball bowled.

Although the BBC changed the schedules last week, the alterations didn't make the daily papers.

Pakistan to play India after 10-year Test gap

NEW DELHI (Reuters) — Pakistan and India will end a 10-year gap when they face each other in a Test match in Delhi next month. Indian cricket officials said yesterday.

Pakistan will play two Tests against India and the two countries will then be joined by Sri Lanka to take part in the inaugural Asian Test Championship.

India and Pakistan, fierce political opponents, have not faced each other in a Test series since 1989, when India toured Pakistan.

Walsh to miss fourth Test, Ambrose doubtful

DURBAN (Reuters) — The beleaguered West Indies cricket team suffered a body blow yesterday with the news that Courtney Walsh will miss the fourth Test against South Africa because of a hamstring injury.

New-ball partner Curly Ambrose is struggling with knee and back problems which could also rule him out of the match at Newlands in Cape Town starting on Saturday.

Walsh sustained his injury while fielding on the final day of the third Test in Durban on Tuesday. South Africa won by nine wickets to take an unbeatable 3-0 lead in the five-match series.

Tomba settles for third in farewell race

SESTRIERE (Reuters) — Italy's Alberto Tomba had to settle for third place yesterday in what was billed as his last competitive slalom race at the scene of some of his greatest World Cup triumphs.

Swiss veteran Paul Accola, Tomba's great World Cup rival in 1992 when he took the title and the Italian was runner-up, won the special three-legged slalom under the floodlights in Sestriere.

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1985, PEUGEOT,

Martin makes the Jets go

He has produced a franchise-record 29 touchdowns, more than 3,200 yards and completed 62 percent of his passes. He is 12-1 as a New York Jets starter, reaching the Pro Bowl and leading the American Football Conference in overall, third-down and fourth-quarter passer rating.

Quarterback Vinny Testaverde's season was magical in its consistency, motivated in its purpose and mandatory to the Jets' realized hopes of an AFC East title and the playoffs. When it comes to Bill Parcells' bus, Testaverde has taken over as driver.

Curtis Martin, however, is the fuel that makes it go. The running back, fulfilling Parcells' \$36-million investment, is the Jets' MVP for this season.

Testaverde's accomplishments are framed in almost every area by Martin's contributions, from his every-down role as a rushing threat, a protector on blitz pickups and as a ball-out passing target for the harried quarterback.

Without Testaverde, the Jets turn to the capable Glenn Foley; without Martin, the Jets turn to vacation planning. Opponents respect Testaverde; they fear Martin.

That is why he is most valuable, more so than Testaverde, linebackers Mo Lewis or Bryan Cox or wide-out Keyshawn Johnson.

"There are games where I feel that I played a more important role where I didn't have a 100 yards," Martin said recently, "where I felt my role was even more important than if I rushed for 150 yards."

Indeed, Martin's presence in the backfield has resulted in up to 45 percent of the game plan rotating around the play-action pass, with 21 of Testaverde's scoring throws coming with the two-time Pro Bowler on the field. The back has produced 1,652 yards from the line of scrimmage despite battling injuries, which cost him a game, second in franchise history to Freeman McNeil's 1,758 yards in 16 contests dur-

ing 1985. After failing to convert six of his first nine rushes on third-and-1, Martin moved the chains on 10 of his last 11 tries from that distance down the stretch, getting stronger as the season went on — mentally and physically. In addition to touching the ball on 42 percent of the team's offensive plays in his 15 games, Martin has established himself as a quiet, spiritual presence in the locker room.

He is, simply, too good to be true. Which is plenty good enough for the Jets.

Other awards: Best Move: Signing Cox, the team's defensive MVP after veteran Marvin Jones tore knee ligaments during the preseason. Cox, outspoken and unbridled, provided a much-needed jolt. Runner-up: Matching the St. Louis Rams' \$2.3-million offer for linebacker Chad Cascadden during the offseason.

Best Quote: "God's playing in some of these games, and he was on our side today" — Parcells after the team's 32-31 victory over the Seahawks on December 6, which ended with Testaverde's controversial TD run on fourth down. Runner-up: Parcells, joking about his weight — "If I fell down, I'd rock myself to sleep."

Play of the Year: Lineman Ernie Logan's stripping of Dolphins quarterback Dan Marino late in a December 13 showdown at Miami. Cascadden picked up the fumble and sprinted 23 yards for the backbreaking touchdown in a 21-16 win. Runner-up: Kicker John Hall's game-winning 32-yard field goal with no time remaining at rainy Kansas City on November 1.

Top Hidden Performer: Nose tackle Jason Ferguson is developing into a run-stuffer on the level of Buffalo Pro Bowler Ted Washington. Runner-up: safety Victor Green. In case no one has noticed, this guy's good.

Rookie of the Year: Tackle Jason Fabini. Runner-up: quarterback coach Dan Henning. (Newsday)

Kentucky ends rare two-game skid

NCAA BASKETBALL

LEXINGTON (AP) — Jamaal Magloire had 15 points and eight rebounds as No. 7 Kentucky routed Tennessee State 97-47 to snap a rare two-game losing streak on Tuesday.

The Wildcats (11-3), coming off losses to Duke and Louisville, shot 74 percent from the field in the second half to halt their first two-game losing streak since the 1993-94 season.

"We needed a game like this heading into conference play on Saturday against Florida," said Ryan Hogan, who scored 12 points in his first career start. "We moved the ball around and finally shot the ball the way we can shoot it." Kentucky, which shot only 40 percent from the field in its two recent losses, shot 56 percent against Tennessee State (4-5).

"I was impressed with our passing and how we took care of the basketball," coach Tubby Smith said. "We played unselfishly to score points."

California 78
No. 9 North Carolina 71
Geno Carlisle scored 29 points in the Pete Newell Challenge at Oakland, California.

"We couldn't stop Carlisle," North Carolina coach Bill Guthridge said. "We were all over him on several of those shots. It's uncanny, the way he gets those shots off."

Brendan Haywood scored 24 points for North Carolina (12-3), which played for the first time since losing to Georgia Tech on December 22. The Tar Heels have their first two-game losing streak since January 1977.

"They're very quick and athletic and they certainly used that to their advantage," Guthridge said of Cal (9-1), which made 14 steals and forced the Tar Heels into 24 turnovers.

No. 5 Stanford 57, Temple 50
Arthur Lee, fighting the flu, scored 16 points and hit four of Stanford's 11 3-pointers in the second game at the Pete Newell Challenge.

Kris Weems added 15 points for Stanford (10-2), which had eight 3-pointers and just one other field goal in the second half — a dunk by Mark-Madsen on an alley-oop pass from Lee. Mark-Madsen scored 14 points for Temple (6-5).



HARD DRIVE — Kentucky's Wayne Turner drives past Tennessee State's Brian Williams in first-half action.

No. 10 UCLA 92
Loyola Marymount 67
At Los Angeles, freshman Jerome Moiso scored 21 points as UCLA won its final tuneup for the Pac-10 season.

Loyola Marymount (4-7), which trailed by 20 points early in the second half, closed to 54-41 with 15:24 left on consecutive 3-pointers by Robert Davis and Rupert McClendon. But UCLA (8-2)

responded with an 11-1 spurt, capped by Ray Young's 3-pointer, to take a 65-42 lead.

Illinois 67, No. 14 Clemson 50
Arias Davis scored a career-high 20 points as visiting Illinois snapped Clemson's eight-game winning streak.

The Tigers (11-2) missed 11 of 12 shots to start the second half as Illinois (8-4) turned a close game into a romp with a 15-3 run. Terrell

McIntyre scored 15 points for Clemson, which shot only 29 percent from the field.

No. 15 New Mexico 84
Houston 69
Kenny Thomas and Lamont Long each scored 23 points as host New Mexico won the Lobo Invitational.

The Lobos (10-1), who have won 37 straight at home against non-conference opponents, put the

Cougars away with a 12-2 run that made it 63-49 with 10:18 left. Gee Gervin, son of former NBA star George Gervin, led Houston (5-6) with 29 points.

No. 16 Minnesota 98
Sacramento St. 57
Quincy Lewis scored 22 points and Kevin Clark added 19 as host Minnesota routed winless Sacramento State.

Minnesota (9-1) led 49-30 at half-time and opened the second half with a 22-4 run to take a 37-point lead. Sean Houston led Sacramento State (0-10) with 24 points.

No. 17 Auburn 99
Bethune-Cookman 46
Mamadou N'diaye and Scott Pohlman scored 18 points apiece as the Tigers won at home in a romp.

Auburn (12-0), off to its best start in 40 years, used runs of 25-4 and 26-4 to take control. The Tigers forced Bethune-Cookman (3-7) into 33 turnovers and held the Wildcats to 29 percent shooting.

No. 22 Syracuse 75
Notre Dame 63
Jason Hart scored 18 points and visiting Syracuse shut down Notre Dame star Troy Murphy.

Murphy was 0-for-11 from the field and finished with five points, snapping his streak of 12 straight games in which he hit for double figures. Notre Dame (7-6, 1-1 Big East) trailed by only one point midway through the second half, but the Orangemen (9-3, 1-2) went on a 12-4 run to go up 58-49.

College Basketball Top 25

How the top 25 teams in the AP's college basketball poll fared Tuesday:
1. Connecticut (8-0) did not play.
2. Duke (11-1) did not play.
3. Cincinnati (11-0) did not play.
4. Maryland (13-1) did not play.
5. Stanford (10-2) beat Temple 57-50.
6. Arizona (7-0) did not play.
7. Kentucky (11-3) beat Tennessee State 97-47.
8. Indiana (13-2) did not play.
9. North Carolina (12-3) lost to California 78-71.
10. UCLA (8-2) beat Loyola Marymount 92-67.
11. Purdue (12-2) did not play.
12. St. John's (10-2) did not play.
13. Michigan State (8-5) did not play.
14. Clemson (11-2) lost to Illinois 67-50.
15. New Mexico (10-1) beat Houston 84-69.
16. Minnesota (9-1) beat Sacramento State 98-57.
17. Auburn (12-0) beat Bethune-Cookman 99-46.
18. Kansas (8-3) did not play.
19. Wisconsin (12-1) did not play.
20. Arkansas (8-2) did not play.
21. Iowa (9-1) did not play.
22. Syracuse (9-3) beat Notre Dame 75-63.
23. Pittsburgh (6-4) did not play.
24. Texas Christian (10-2) did not play.
25. Oklahoma State (7-3) did not play.

Lightning strike to stop home drought



TAMPA (AP) — Vincent Lecavalier had a spectacular second-period goal and Bill Ranford stopped 35 shots as Tampa Bay snapped a nine-game home losing streak with a 3-0 win over the New York Islanders on Tuesday.

Lecavalier split the defense near the blue line and then put a shot between goalie Marcel Cousineau's pads while being pulled down from behind by New York defenseman Zdeno Chara at 6:43 of the second.

Ranford preserved his 15th career shutout by stopping Robert Reichel's breakaway attempt midway through the third period.

Flyers 4, Flames 3
Valeri Zelenchuk scored 1:57 into overtime as Philadelphia, despite a second-period injury to Eric Lindros, battled back from a two-goal deficit to win on the road.

Zelenchuk took the puck over the Calgary blue line, cut to his left and beat Andrei Trefilov high on the blocker side from the top of the face-off circle.

Lindros was hit twice on the same shift along the side boards with six minutes left in the second and did not return. His status was not immediately known.

Trailing 3-1 entering the third peri-

od, the Flyers tied the game on goals by Danis Zubrus and Dan McGillis. Colin Forbes also scored for the Flyers, who extend their unbeaten streak to nine games (5-0-4).

Clarke Wilm, Theoren Fleury and Todd Simpson had goals for the Flames, who have lost five in a row at home.

Canadiens 5, Oilers 2
Mark Recchi ended a career-worst 18-game goalless drought without taking a shot and added a second goal in Montreal's away win.

On a delayed tripping penalty against Recchi, Oilers defenseman Jarne Ninimaa banked a pass off the boards that slid the length of the ice and into the unoccupied Edmonton net with goaltender Mikhail Shtalenkov on the bench for an extra attacker. Recchi was given credit for the goal at 5:56 of the first period because he was the last Montreal player to touch the puck.

Brett Clark and Sergei Zholtok also scored for the Canadiens, who had ended an 11-game winless streak with a 2-1 victory last Saturday in Toronto.

Avalanche 4, Canucks 2
Valeri Kamensky had a goal, ending a 15-game scoring drought, and added three assists as visiting Colorado won a fight-filled game.

Claude Lemieux, who also had an assist, scored the go-ahead goal to snap a 2-2 tie 6:59 into the third period as the Avalanche won for only the third time in their last nine games (3-

5-11). The teams, playing for the second time in 12 days, had two fights in a first period that featured 96 minutes in penalties, including game misconducts to Avalanche's Wade Belak and the Canucks' Chris McAllister.

N.Y. Islanders 0-0-0
2-1-3
First Period—None. Second Period—1, Tampa Bay, Lecavalier 6 (Pichler), 6:43. 2, Tampa Bay, McCarthy 3 (Cousineau, Trefilov), 14:28 (pp). Third Period—3, Tampa Bay, Selkover 5 (Clark), 17:42 (pp). Shots on goal—New York, 14-8-13-35; Tampa Bay, 5-5-7-17. Goals—New York, Cousineau, Tampa Bay, Ranford, A-12-24-38.

Philadelphia 9-12-4
2-10-3
First Period—1, Calgary, Wilm 5 (Hulse, Smith), 9:04 (pp). 2, Calgary, Fleury 18 (Hulse), 18:16. Second Period—3, Philadelphia, Forbes 6 (Zubrus), 2:26. 4, Calgary, Igla 14 (Simpson), 6:04. Third Period—1, Philadelphia, Zubrus 3 (Cousineau), 1:08 (pp). 2, Philadelphia, McCarthy 3 (Brett), 1:57. Overtime—1, Philadelphia, Zelenchuk 1 (Fleury), 6:59. Goals—Philadelphia, Reichel, Calgary, Trefilov, A-17, 10-4.

Montreal 5-0-0-5
2-2-0-5
First Period—1, Montreal, Clark 2 (Sheverson, Dwyer), 2:11. 2, Montreal, Recchi 8, 5:56 (pp). 3, Edmonton, Murray 6 (Cousineau, Fleury), 12:27. 4, Edmonton, Beranek 5, 14:15. Second Period—1, Montreal, Corbin 5 (Reichel, Kovtyukh), 8:04 (pp). 2, Montreal, Zholtok 1, 1:37. Third Period—1, Montreal, Recchi 7 (Kovtyukh), 6:04. Third Period—None. Shots on goal—Montreal, 11-12-11-34. Edmonton, 10-10-10-30. Power-play Opportunities—Montreal, 1 of 5; Edmonton, 0 of 4. Goals—Montreal, Recchi, Edmonton, Shtalenkov, Fleury, A-10-12-10-22.

Colorado 11-2-4
10-1-3
First Period—1, Colorado, Forsberg 10 (Lemieux, Kamensky, 7:11. 2, Vancouver, Wilm 4 (Hedberg), 17:25 (pp). Second Period—1, Colorado, Kamensky 7 (Dwyer, Lefkowitz), 10:48. Third Period—1, Vancouver, Lemieux 12 (Cousineau), 6:59. 2, Colorado, Forsberg 1 (Forsberg), 12:50 (pp). Shots on goal—Colorado, 11-10-10-31. Vancouver, 6-7-16-29. Goals—Colorado, Lemieux, Forsberg, A-10-12-10-22.

The Canucks, coming off back-to-back shutout losses, lost their third straight and are 4-10-3 in their last 17 games.

EASTERN CONFERENCE						
Atlantic Division						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
New Jersey	20	9	4	44	101	84
Philadelphia	17	9	4	43	96	77
Pittsburgh	14	10	7	35	85	84
N.Y. Rangers	12	14	1	31	90	90
N.Y. Islanders	13	21	2	28	87	106
Northeast Division						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Buffalo	19	7	5	43	91	58
Toronto	18	13	2	40	107	97
Boston	15	12	4	34	84	72
Ottawa	15	13	4	34	92	78
Montreal	10	18	7	27	78	98
Southeast Division						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Carolina	16	14	5	37	89	84
Florida	13	12	6	32	81	82
Washington	11	18	3	25	70	82
Tampa Bay	9	23	3	21	72	119

WESTERN CONFERENCE						
Central Division						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Detroit	17	15	2	36	106	95
St. Louis	12	11	9	33	87	83
Chicago	13	17	3	29	78	98
Minnesota	10	20	4	24	77	113
Northwest Division						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Colorado	16	14	3	35	81	86
Edmonton	15	17	3	33	96	94
Vancouver	13	18	4	30	96	104
Calgary	12	20	3	27	96	106
Pacific Division						
	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Ballas	22	5	6	50	99	65
Vancouver	20	7	4	44	91	68
Anaheim	13	12	8	34	78	75
San Jose	10	15	5	28	70	75
Los Angeles	11	21	3	25	78	95

United and Chelsea stalemate benefits leaders Aston Villa

LONDON (Reuters) — Chelsea and Manchester United played out a 0-0 stalemate in the premier league on Tuesday night, allowing Aston Villa to move into 1999 in top spot.

In a scrappy match Chelsea, who would have overhauled Villa had they won, enjoyed the better of the first half, capitalizing on Manchester United's passing errors in midfield and testing Denmark goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel.

Norway's lanky Chelsea forward Tore Andre Flo went into the break deeply frustrated after putting the ball wide or high from clear scoring positions four times.

Both managers, Chelsea's Italian boss Gianluca Vialli and United's Alex Ferguson, were pleased to have avoided defeat.

"I'm a little disappointed after that first half but satisfied with the point," said Vialli.

"Chelsea created a few good chances and we were lucky to survive the first half," said Ferguson, adding: "I think both teams are happy to have settled for a draw."

Flo's sharpest chance went begging after a display of Italian wizardry from Gianfranco Zola, who rounded two defenders and fired from close range. Schmeichel parried at Flo's feet but the ball ricocheted just wide.

Chelsea's World Cup winning captain Frank Leboeuf and fellow defender Michael Duberry kept Andy Cole and Paul Scholes in check but got a fright halfway through the first period when Andy Cole rounded Chelsea's keeper Ed de Goey only to see his shot scrambled off the line.

Ten minutes later a rather subdued David Beckham curled in a cross but Scholes's shot went straight to the keeper.

Beckham perked up in the second half and benefited from Scholes's substitution by Teddy Sheringham, who made more space up front.

United upped their tempo and tightened their somewhat porous defence with Roy Keane and Gary Neville distributing with greater flair and imagination.

De Goey was forced to punch the ball out from Sheringham in the 61st minute and an imposing Duberry scrambled the ball off the line four minutes later.

Zola, ever busy, had Chelsea's best chance of the second half but when he found himself face to face with Schmeichel he tried and failed to power the ball through the big Dane's legs.

Schmeichel, who leaves English football at the end of the season, confounded critics who maintain he has lost his touch with an inspired display throughout a match Chelsea will feel they lost through squandered chances.

They can count themselves lucky that they did not finish the game with 10 men after the referee, showing seasonal goodwill — failed to produce a second yellow card for Leboeuf for pushing Beckham after he had already gone in the book for a foul on Cole.

The Frenchman himself was waiting for his marching orders.

In the night's other premier league match, Wimbledon fought back twice to hold fifth-placed Leeds to a 2-2 draw.

In Scotland, Aberdeen were denied a fourth successive premier league victory when they drew 1-1 at home to Motherwell.

Sixth-placed Aberdeen looked certain to replace Motherwell, fifth,

when Scotland international Eoin Jess scored with a 20-meter shot which went in off the post in the 31st minute.

But Motherwell striker Lee McCulloch equalized in the 67th minute when he volleyed in Pat Nevin's cross.

Bottom club Dunfermline thought they were going to leave St. Johnstone with a rare victory after Andy Smith's 69th minute penalty — only the sixth of the campaign for a striker who scored 26 last season — put them ahead.

Their hopes were dashed when Paul Kane levelled in the 81st minute with a shot from 16 meters.

Premier League	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Aston Villa	20	11	4	5	31	28	38
Chelsea	20	9	10	1	31	17	37
Manchester United	20	8	8	3	29	25	35
Arsenal	20	9	8	3	22	11	35
Leeds United	20	8	9	3	34	19	33
West Ham United	20	5	6	9	24	33	23
Liverpool	20	4	7	9	36	25	21
Sheff Wed	20	7	4	9	32	30	26
Wimbledon	20	6	6	8	27	30	24
Leicester City	20	7	6	7	23	28	28
Derby County	20	6	10	4	20	28	28
Nottingham Forest	20	6	7	7	28	27	27
Sheff Utd	20	6	6	8	24	24	24
Everton	20	5	8	7	31	23	23
Sheff Wednesday	20	6	4	10	21	22	22
Blackburn Rovers	20	4	6	10	28	18	18
Coventry City	20	4	5	11	16	28	17
Charlton Athletic	20	3	7	10	23	31	16
Southampton	20	3	5	12	16	38	14
Nottingham Forest	20	2	7	11	18	33	13

Scottish Premier	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	19	12	4	3	35	16	40
Kilmarnock	20	10	7	3	28	11	37
Celtic	20	9	6	5	42	20	33
St Johnstone	21	7	9	5	24	27	30
Motherwell	21	6	9	6	20	27	26
Aberdeen	21	6	6	9	22	31	24
Hearts	20	6	5	9	21	27	23
Dundee	19	5	5	9	17	28	20
Dundee United	20	4	7	9	18	24	19
Dundee City	21	3	11	7	19	31	17

CRITICS' CHOICE

CLASSICAL MUSIC

MICHAEL AJZENSTADT

David Shalton leads the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra-IBA in Benjamin Britten's monumental *War Requiem*, Saturday night at 8:30 at the Jerusalem International Convention Center with a preview concert at 7:30.

Young composer Keren Rosenbaum has inaugurated *Reflex*, an ensemble of young musicians/formers who present their first opus, *Reflex*, which is a multimedia music/theater/dance/video extravaganza composed by Rosenbaum. The premiere takes place Friday at 10 p.m. at the Side Stage of the Tel Aviv Performing Arts Center.

The biannual Musica Sacra Festival takes place in Nazareth on Friday and Saturday and features eight concerts at the city's Salesian Church and the Sisters of Mary Church. Among the highlights is a program of Russian liturgical music (Saturday at 11 a.m.), a program titled "The Spring of Love and Joy" with Christmas songs from the Byzantine tradition (Saturday at 6 p.m.).

Members of the Ensemble Intercontemporain from Paris and Jerusalem's Kaprizma ensemble will perform works by Schoenberg, Kopytman, Ehrlich, Shanon, Wolpe and Denonov in a special concert tonight at 8:30 at the Jerusalem Music Center and tomorrow at 2 p.m. at the Israel Music Conservatory in Tel Aviv.

Aviv Ron leads his Ramat Gan Chamber Orchestra in an all-English program of compositions by Purcell, Vaughan Williams, Holst, Britten and Elgar with violinist Nati Zori as soloist. Saturday at 8:30 p.m. at the Ramat Gan Theater.

The Soul Children of Chicago perform spirituals, gospel music and a special gospel version of Handel's *Messiah* with the Kibbutz Chamber Orchestra Saturday at 4:30 p.m. in Nazareth. All other performances will take place at 8:30 p.m. - Sunday at Kibbutz Dorot, January 5 at the Mann Auditorium in Tel Aviv, January 6 at Ein Hashofet and January 7 at the Sherover Theater in Jerusalem.



The young performers of Reflex present a buoyant multimedia show.

The Idan Trio, with violinist Atar Arad, plays chamber music by Beethoven, Mozart and Fauré tomorrow at noon at the Targ Center in Ein Kerem, Jerusalem.

The chamber music series at the Israel Music Conservatory in Tel Aviv continues on Saturday at 8:30 p.m. with Mendelssohn's First Piano Quartet and the French Piano Quintet. Assaf Zohar will be at the piano.

The Schola Gregoriana Pragensis, a 10-member vocal ensemble specializing in Czech Gregorian music, makes its local debut tonight in a special New Year's Eve concert at the Maronite Church in Jaffa (8:30 p.m.). Tomorrow they perform at the Musica Sacra Festival in Nazareth (2:30 p.m.), on January 2 they appear in Ein Hashofet (10:30 a.m.) and at Karmiel (8:30 p.m.). On January 5 they are at the House of Grace Church in Haifa (8:30 p.m.), and their tour ends on January 9 at the Augusta Victoria Church on Mt. Scopus in Jerusalem (11:30 a.m.).

RADIO

VOICE OF MUSIC

6:05 Dittersdorf: String Quartet no 6; Mozart Horn Quartet 1407; Schumann: Piano Quartet op.57 (Les Adieux); 7:07 Chaconne: Sonata in F for Horn and Strings; Bach: Cantata no 144 "Nun, was dein Ich und gütig ist"; Handel: Harpsichord Suite no 1; Haydn: String Quartet no 762; 8:05 Katsenelson: Cello Concerto no 1 op. 48; Brahms: Horn Trio no 40; 9:05 Debussy: Petite Suite; Schubert: Symphony no 8; Beethoven: Piano Concerto no 2 op. 19; Mendelssohn: Les Femmes de Alceste; 10:00 Concerto for Orchestra; Paganini: Violin Concerto no 1; Schumann: Symphony no 3; 10:20 Noon with Gideon Hol; 10:00 Encore - Paul Robeson at Carnegie Hall (19.5.58); 10:30 Video of Music Magazine; 10:30 Bach: Sonata in B minor for Violin and Harpsichord; Zelenka: Miserere in C minor; Haydn: String Quartet op. 55; Beethoven: Sonata in A for Cello and Piano op. 102; 11:00 Cantata IV, Journey of the Magi, op. 86; Stravinsky: String Quartet no 1 "From My Life"; 11:00 New CDs - Bernstein: String

Quartet no 3 (Yiddish Quartet); Schumann: Der Rose Pilgerfahrt op. 12; 12:05 Sarah Fuchsman-Hayman, piano; Haydn: Sonata in D Hob.33; Menachem Zuri: Piano Concerto (1983) (USO) (Robertson); Paganini: Violin Concerto no 1; 12:30 Art of the Song - Songs of Franz Schubert - program no 58 - Die Winterreise, second program.

RADIOWEST

CNN news on the hour followed by RadioWest local news; 6:00 Morning Drive with Marc Sermon (until 9:00); 7:00 Sports Update; 8:00 Lona Trust Financial Update; 8:00 Morning Bridge with Sharon Wagner (until 12:00); 10:00 Legal Eagle with Larry Dubb; 12:00 The Twenty Report with Michael Twenty; 12:00 Midday News; 12:30 Memory Lane with Rebecca E. A for Cello and Piano op. 102; 1:00 Cantata IV, Journey of the Magi, op. 86; Stravinsky: String Quartet no 1 "From My Life"; 11:00 New CDs - Bernstein: String

Teisha Bader and Larry Gamliel; 21:00 Staying Sane with Dr. Miriam Adarim; 22:00 Sleeping Rock with Redboard; 1:00 Sleepless in Jerusalem with Aaron Katzman (until 3:00).

BBC WORLD SERVICE

6:00 The World Today; 6:30 Inflight; 6:45 On the Edge of the Shell; 7:00 The World Today; 7:30 Outlook; 7:55 Music Brief; 8:00 The World Today; 8:30 Morning Drive with Marc Sermon (until 9:00); 9:00 World News; 9:15 Off the Shelf: Columbia; 9:30 Composer of the Month; 10:00 World News; 10:10 Performance for Thought; 10:15 Performance; 10:30 Electronic Jukebox; 11:00 World News; 11:05 World Business Report; 11:15 World News; 11:30 Network; 11:45 Sports Roundup; 12:00 World News; 12:30 Discovery; 12:30 Newsweek; 12:30 Record News; 12:45 From Our Own Correspondent; 12:50 Newsweek.

14:00 World News; 14:05 World Business Report; 14:15 Britain Today; 14:20 Early News; 14:45 Sports Roundup; 15:00 Newsweek; 15:00 World News; 15:05 Outlook; 15:30 Multitask X-Press; 17:00 World News; 17:05 Sports Roundup; 17:15 Westway; 17:30 The Village Chart Show; 18:00 World News; 18:15 Record News; 18:30 Inflight; 18:45 Britain Today; 19:00 Europe Today; 19:30 World Business Report; 19:45 Sports Roundup; 20:00 Newsweek; 20:00 Assignment; 21:00 News Summary; 21:05 World News; 21:25 Peace for Thought; 21:30 John Peel; 21:45 Newsweek; 22:00 World News; 22:15 Britain Today; 22:30 World News; 22:35 World Business Report; 22:45 From Our Own Correspondent; 23:00 Newsweek.

JORDAN TV (31)

18:00 Holy Koran; 18:10 Sports; 18:20 The Young and the Restless; 18:30 The Young and the Restless; 18:40 The Young and the Restless; 18:50 The Young and the Restless; 19:00 The Young and the Restless; 19:10 The Young and the Restless; 19:20 The Young and the Restless; 19:30 The Young and the Restless; 19:40 The Young and the Restless; 19:50 The Young and the Restless; 20:00 The Young and the Restless; 20:10 The Young and the Restless; 20:20 The Young and the Restless; 20:30 The Young and the Restless; 20:40 The Young and the Restless; 20:50 The Young and the Restless; 21:00 The Young and the Restless; 21:10 The Young and the Restless; 21:20 The Young and the Restless; 21:30 The Young and the Restless; 21:40 The Young and the Restless; 21:50 The Young and the Restless; 22:00 The Young and the Restless; 22:10 The Young and the Restless; 22:20 The Young and the Restless; 22:30 The Young and the Restless; 22:40 The Young and the Restless; 22:50 The Young and the Restless; 23:00 The Young and the Restless; 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